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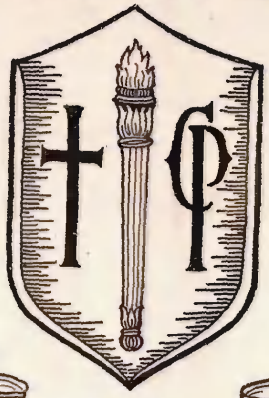

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J. W. Mailliard, Jr.

THE

FALL OF NAPOLEON:

AN HISTORICAL MEMOIR.

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THE

FALL OF NAPOLEON:

AN HISTORICAL MEMOIR.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. J. MITCHELL, H.P.,

Author of "The Life of Wallenstein;" "Thoughts on Tactics," &c., &c.

THAT WHOLE NATIONS BELIEVE, IS NO EVIDENCE OF TRUTH.
Jacobus Dusch.

VOLUME FIRST.

Second Edition.

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TO THE

SURVIVING OFFICERS

WHO SERVED ON

THE QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S STAFF

IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS,

THIS WORK

IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

It is right to warn the reader not to expect in the present Memoir any repetition of the lofty praise so generally bestowed on the genius, talents, or the amiability even, of the late Emperor of the French. Historical romances in favour of Napoleon may be seen in a thousand volumes, and must not be sought for in a work, the avowed object of which, however feebly contended for, is to dispel the very delusions excited by so many fables, and to place an historical character, divested of the false halo that events and party zeal have cast around it, on a fair pedestal of historical truth.

If he who would write for the many must, as we often hear it said, write in accordance with the views of the many, then will this book have little popularity to anticipate; for the author is perfectly conscious that he writes against a strong current of adverse opinion, and cannot expect the support of any party, properly so considered.

Those who conquered Napoleon will naturally feel disposed to uphold his greatness, in order to enhance the merit of their victory; and those who lauded the power and genius of our former adversary in such lofty style, must, for the sake of consistency, persevere in the same strain. He can, therefore, expect a fair trial from those only who may look upon the question here started as one independent altogether of party views, and fairly open to historical inquiry.

The author admits, with regret indeed, that the opinion of distinguished writers in our own language can be quoted against the views advocated in this Memoir. But he looks upon the question at issue, as one that must be decided by evidence, and not by the mere authority of names, however high they may deservedly rank in public estimation; and he believes that he has had access to information which his predecessors overlooked, or which was not accessible at the time when they wrote. As the last in the list, he enjoyed the additional advantage of having the works of Scott, Lockhart, Hazlitt, and Alison before him, when he composed his own; and it was impossible, while engaged in his task, not to profit by the labours of such writers, however much he might differ from the conclusions at which they arrive.

Though the author of this Memoir has had opportunities of seeing a number of private journals and unpublished documents, and has conversed with many persons engaged in the great events which he has here endeavoured to

describe, he is bound to confess that the present work is mainly founded on printed and published accounts, now in one shape or the other fully before the world. He has made no historical discovery, and frankly avows his conviction that none remains to be made. The leading events of the period of which he speaks are known to all; but he certainly believes that he has had the means of placing those which come within the scope of his subject in a clearer and more accurate point of view; and if he has done justice to his cause, and to the opportunities he possessed, they should appear in a light which must greatly change the inferences usually drawn from them. Properly searched, the mass of printed evidence before the world contains ample materials for an accurate history of the earth-shaking events that marked the concluding years of the last and the beginning of the present century; the difficulty is to extract the golden particles of truth from the enormous amount of dross in which they are mixed up. And if the present writer lays stress on the verbal information he has received, on the many conversations he has held with persons engaged in the scenes described, it is because he believes that such information tends to give the proper tone, life, and spirit, to the dead matter derived solely from printed books.

With the exception of Napoleon and Murat, the author has seen nearly all the leading men named in his work; and though he can lay no stress on the few words addressed by Kings, Emperors, and Marshals, to an

officer of humble rank at public levées or presentations, he certainly thinks that the mere circumstance of having seen the actors, has facilitated the task of describing the actions in which they were engaged.

It may possibly be asserted, and has already been so indeed, that the views here maintained originate in English prejudice; but those who are at all acquainted with the opinions of the time, must know that our national prejudices now run in the opposite direction, and so completely in favour of the late Emperor of the French, that many seek even a reputation for liberality in lauding our fallen enemy: such persons forgetting altogether, that his very fall removed him from the hostile ranks, made him the property of history; and that he can only be overrated or undervalued at the expense of the philosophy which teaches by example. We shall no doubt be told, and with the self-satisfied air which generally accompanies such speeches, "that Napoleon was no fool:" and this may be perfectly true; but those who deal in such sayings should not overlook the fact, that it is very possible to be "no fool," and still to stand a thousand degrees lower on the scale of intellect, than the high pinnacle of genius on which so many writers strive to place the late Emperor of the French.

Liberal criticism has not waited for the publication of the present work to assail the author: and as it has been said, so it will be said again, that he writes from personal hatred and antipathy to Napoleon. It so happens, however, that he never saw Napoleon, and was

never injured by him, nor by any of his satellites: he can say with Tacitus, "*Mihi Galba, Otho, Vitellius, nec beneficio, nec injuria cogniti;*" and he frankly avows that he does not understand how personal enmity can be entertained against a purely historical character, and where there is in fact no person to hate. Hatred and antipathy can only exist by being concentrated on some distinct and tangible object, and can neither be excited nor maintained by a shadow and a name.

> "Produce the urn that Hannibal contains,
> And weigh the mighty dust that yet remains,"

and then tell us what personal enmity the most zealous admirer of Rome can awaken in his breast, at the sight of what was once the great victor of Cannæ and of Thrasymene. Those who know the writer, know besides that if he had allowed personal feelings to influence any part of his work, he must necessarily have joined the numerous assailants of the Liverpool government: but he had nothing to do here with individual grievances, however nearly they may affect his own interest; he had only to speak of the line of policy pursued by the country during the war, and believing that policy to have been great, just, and noble, he has spoken of it accordingly.

The larger portion of the present Memoir had already passed through the press, when the first three volumes of M. Thiers' *History of the Consulate and the Empire*

reached Edinburgh ; and as the book advocates views diametrically opposed to those maintained in these pages, and may derive weight from the position of the author, it behoves us to show that no reliance can be placed upon its accuracy, and that none of our statements can therefore be shaken by its contents. We readily exonerate M. Thiers from all intention to deceive, and willingly give him the benefit of any excuse which may be made in his favour ; but must still maintain our position, that no reliance whatever can be placed on his work.

We are as conscious as any can be, that no history written by merely mortal hands will be entirely free from error ; but independently of the number of errors which may render any work unworthy of credit, there are some errors of a character which must always produce that effect, even when less numerous than in the work. of which we are speaking. Passing over the want of knowledge M. Thiers displays of English institutions, of English character, manners, and feelings, we proceed at once to a statement of facts, sufficient, we hope, to establish the severe censure here passed upon his work.

The pride which the French people may justly feel in the events of the campaign of Marengo, would, it might be thought, have induced the historian to seek for accurate information respecting its details. These are now easily accessible ; but instead of using them, M. Thiers has thought proper to overlook them, and to repeat a romance which those who are acquainted with

the military literature of France, know to rest upon a very discreditable forgery.

All who are familiar with the histories and biographies of Napoleon, will know that the gain of the battle of Marengo is ascribed to an "oblique retreat," a throwing back of the left of the right wing by an echelon movement, of which the village of Castel-Ceriol became the pivot. The absolute extravagance of supposing such a movement practicable, when the situation of the parties is considered, cannot be detailed here, nor is it necessary; we are only recalling the fact, that all accounts of the battle represent it as having been made. M. Thiers follows his predecessors, and only surpasses them in the glowing colours with which he describes the conception of this brilliant movement flashing on the mind of the First Consul, and its prompt and gallant execution by the troops. And yet it was never thought of till *five years after the battle had been fought!*

The fact is this: Napoleon wishing, about the year 1803, to have a detailed account of his most brilliant victory published, caused materials for the work to be collected. The General and Staff-Officers were consulted, and the Field-Officers who had commanded regiments in the action were ordered to Paris for the purpose of being examined. Two German statements of no particular value, the one contained in *The European Annals*, the other in the *New Bellona*, were also taken to hand; and with these materials the work proceeded. Count de Castres was employed to draw the

plans, Colonel Vallonge wrote the text, and when the whole was completed, Berthier, who afterwards lent his name to the book, submitted it to the Chief Consul. It was returned with an endless number of alterations, and had to be worked over again; for the Consul desired that the retreat, which was still a direct one, should be described as having been made by "alternate battalions," though the testimony of all the officers declared, that the battalions, reduced to half their number, were falling back in utter confusion, one only being in condition to obey the orders of General Lasne.

The chief however had to be obeyed: and when the work was finished to the Consul's satisfaction, it was prepared for publication. Napoleon in the meantime had been crowned King of Italy, and was about to hold a review at Marengo, a circumstance which suggested to Berthier the idea of presenting him with a copy of the book on the very battle-field itself. Two were accordingly sent to Milan, and submitted to the Emperor: but a change had come over the Imperial dream: the direct retreat across the plain was now far too simple a movement, and the grand conception of the "oblique retreat"—*movement de conversion*—was then determined upon. And after various changes, which cannot be detailed here, the work so altered was published to the world under the title of *Relation de la Bataille de Marengo, par le Général Berthier*. Napoleon fearing, no doubt, that chance might cause this piece of historical forgery to be divulged, gave orders that the printed

copies of the first version, only five in number, should be destroyed, the types broken up, the plates ground down, and the written document burned. Colonel Muriel succeeded however in saving a copy; and in 1828, the whole transaction here briefly related was published in the fourth volume of the *Mémorial du Dèpôt Géneral de la Guerre*. As M. Thiers deviates in a slight particular from *Berthier's Relation*, the uncharitable will suspect that he knows the publication here mentioned; and the reader who looks for truth in the pages of history, may possibly think that he ought to have known it.

Nor is this the only mistake the author has committed in merely describing the campaign of Marengo. He speaks of the Austrian army as 36,000 or 40,000 strong in the battle, whereas it is well known that they were less than 30,000. The returns, together with a clear and admirable account of the action, are given in the Austrian Military Journal for 1823, a work published by authority, and admitted by all parties in Germany to be distinguished for the most scrupulous truth and accuracy. The historian who attempts to describe the great wars that arose out of the French Revolution, without consulting so valuable a source of information, will not be entitled to claim much credit from the unbiassed reader.

Having shown some of M. Thiers' errors, let us now give a specimen of what many will think his brilliant imagination.

Among the English gentlemen who visited Paris

during the brief interval of peace, obtained for the world by the Treaty of Amiens, was the celebrated Charles James Fox. Like others, he was presented at the Tuileries, and very politely received by the Chief Consul, who addressed him in the most flattering terms. But as the English statesman is known to have been a man of genius, talents, and influence, it became necessary to show how well the Consul could appreciate such merit; and M. Thiers therefore establishes an immediate friendship between Napoleon and the leader of the English Opposition. "The First Consul," says the historian, "set all etiquette aside with this generous stranger, introduced him to his family circle, held many long and interesting conversations with him, and seemed desirous of making, in his person, the conquest of the whole English nation." After a good deal more in the same style, we find the First Consul conducting Mr Fox to the exhibition of French Industry, which enables M. Thiers to give us the following anecdote:—"In the midst of the attention of which he was the object, Mr Fox gave way to a sally that does honour to the wit as well as to the sentiments of that noble person; and shows that with him justice to France was fully compatible with the most sensitive feeling of patriotism. In one of the saloons of the Louvre stood a large and beautiful terrestrial globe destined for the Chief Consul, and very skilfully constructed. One of the persons in the suite, turning it round, and placing his hand on the British Islands, observed rather awkwardly that 'England occu-

pied a very small space on the map of the world.' 'Yes,' replied Fox with vivacity, 'it is in that small island that all the English are born, and there also they all wish to die; but while they live,' he continued, extending his arms round the two oceans and the Indies, 'they fill the globe by their might.'"

Now, unfortunately for the author of the *Consulate and the Empire*, there is not one syllable of truth in this whole story. M. Thiers has allowed himself to be shamefully imposed upon; and must know little of English character, or he would not have been so ready to believe that an English gentleman, accustomed to the best society in Europe, would be guilty of so foolish a rhodomontade before the chief magistrate of a great nation, a man for whose talents M. Thiers says that he entertained the highest admiration. At page 505 of the "*Mission to the Court of Vienna,*" Mr Adair gives extracts from the journals of Mr Fox and General Fitzpatrick, as well as a letter from Mrs Fox; and in all these it is distinctly stated that Mr Fox only saw the Chief Consul three times; once at the public levée, again at a large dinner party, when 200 guests were present, and a third time at this very exhibition of French Industry, where, unfortunately for M. Thiers' anecdote, Napoleon *did not take the least notice of him.* Mr Adair, who was in company with Mr Fox for several hours every day during the period of this visit, fully confirms the account.

Speaking of the presentation at the Tuileries, General Fitzpatrick says, "The Consul addressed him,"—

Mr Fox,—"in a speech evidently prepared, which he was some time in delivering, and apparently anxious not to forget any part of it." We purposely quote the words, as they confirm other statements to the same effect contained in this Memoir.

That the victories achieved by the British can form no pleasant subject for literary composition to M. Thiers, we readily admit: we honour, and highly too, the patriotic feelings which make an author mourn the disasters sustained by his country's arms; but we can make no allowance for the historian who permits such sentiments, however creditable, to influence any statement of facts. History is stern and unyielding, sanctions no discolouring of the events which are its property to soothe or gratify national predilections, and demands truth as the sole foundation on which sorrow or exultation can be indulged. M. Thiers acts differently, and shows either want of candour or of knowledge, when speaking of the actions fought against the British; and history can excuse neither the one nor the other: for though the historian need be neither a naval nor a military tactician, there is a certain degree of commonplace and very easily acquired knowledge indispensably necessary to all who would describe the events of war. Two instances of this deficiency will show the spirit in which the *Consulate and the Empire* is written.

In his account of the British preparations for the battle fought in the Straits of Gibraltar, M. Thiers makes Sir James Saumarez, who is described as being

acharnè, supply the ships of war with furnaces for heating shot; and actually makes the Superb fire red-hot shot during the action. Here again the historian has allowed himself to be imposed upon, and rather easily indeed; for any midshipman could have told him that red-hot shot had never yet been used, or attempted to be used, in naval warfare.

In speaking of the landing in Egypt,—one of the most gallant actions ever performed,—M. Thiers tells us that the English soldiers were laying down in the bottom of the boats—*couchés dans le fond des chaloupes*—while the sailors were rowing. That such an arrangement would have been desirable cannot be doubted, for it would have afforded some slight shelter to the men, who, sitting motionless on the benches, were fully exposed to all the fury of the French shot poured upon them during their long and slow advance to the shore. But a very little reflection, especially when reclining on a sofa, must have shown that it was totally impracticable with any conceivable number of boats and rowers—unless we suppose the soldiers to have been packed into the boats, tier above tier: no pleasant position at any time we should think, and least of all to men encumbered with arms, knapsacks, and accoutrements. The description of the combat fought on the landing, borders almost on the ludicrous, and is very unjust to M. Thiers' countrymen, who acted on this, as on every occasion, with soldier-like skill and gallantry; whereas the historian, wishing no doubt to enhance their merit, makes them behave in a very foolish manner.

It would much exceed the limits of a preface, were we to point out the many errors contained in the published part of M. Thiers' work; we have only given specimens: and though it now signifies little, nothing indeed, how the battle of Marengo was gained, in what manner the naval combat in the Straits of Gibraltar was fought, or the landing in Egypt effected,—it signifies a great deal to all who value the knowledge which history imparts, that its stream should remain clear and transparent, free from the errors by which passion so often strives to darken its course.

The tone in which his book is written has, we fear, deprived M. Thiers of an opportunity of effecting a really great object. He possesses vast influence over the minds of a large portion of his countrymen, and might have used it in a noble cause. It was in his power to allay—to have done a great deal at least towards allaying—the worthless and malignant spirit of hostility so generally fostered in France against this country. His voice would have been heard; and he might therefore have held up to universal scorn and contempt the wretched and ignoble falsehoods circulated against England, and which find belief from the boldness of continued and uncontradicted assertion.

As a statesman who has held the highest post in the councils of France, he must know, that from the moment the war ceased, we ceased in this country to feel the slightest enmity against our former adversaries: colonial empires conquered at vast sacrifices were resigned,

in hopes of establishing a lasting and cordial amity between the nations; nor has any effort been wanting on this side of the water, to awaken the same feeling of good-will towards ancient foes, that we have never ceased to feel since arms were laid aside. The French are naturally a generous people, at least easily excited to generous emotions, and would readily reciprocate sentiments of friendship were they convinced that such were entertained in their favour. M. Thiers might have done much towards convincing them of this; and instead of rekindling hateful passions by means that none will ever praise, might have aided in reconciling the two most influential nations in Europe, secured a long and lasting period of peace and confidence to the world, and founded a just title to the gratitude of both countries. And many will think that there was more glory to be acquired by such conduct, than by writing an additional romance in favour of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Of the French literature bearing on the history of the period comprised within the limits of this Memoir, it is impossible to give any detailed account here. None of the cloud of works of which it is composed can be implicitly relied upon,—the greater number, indeed, are totally worthless: but cautiously used, many will furnish good information; though even the best must be weighed by the political views and bias of the writers. On military subjects, the *Spectateur Militaire* and the *Journal des Sciences Militaires* must be consulted; for military literature has of late made considerable pro-

gress in France, and both works now frequently contain articles of great merit. Bignon and Capefigue furnish a number of authentic and highly important documents; and the last-named writer has, notwithstanding his strange and affected style, given us by far the ablest and most interesting French history of the Consular and Imperial *régime* yet published.

In the present Memoir, the author has endeavoured to balance the exaggerations of French writers, by the more dispassionate statements of the Germans. The latter have, indeed, no general history of Napoleon or his time that has yet taken any station in literature; but they have a great variety of memoirs relating to particular periods and events, personal narratives, descriptions of campaigns, battles, and negotiations; and their periodical publications, such as the *Minerva*, *Pallas*, *Posselt's Annalen*, and others, are full of explanations, statements, and documents, of the greatest interest and importance. As a general guide, the author has often followed *Die Chronick* des 19ten *Jarhundreds* by Bredow and Venturini. He has, also, as stated in the proper place, derived great benefit from the works of the late General Clausewitz; but he thinks it due to himself to say, that he had already published three brief sketches of the campaigns of Moscow and Waterloo, the last of which, entitled "Strategical Examination of the Campaign of Waterloo," appeared in print a year before the Prussian General's account of the same events had been given to the world. The general outline of the

views contained in the original sketches are still retained here ; many agree with those expressed by Clausewitz ; and the reader may well believe that it is gratifying to any writer to find his opinions supported by the authority of such a man.

The Military Journals also form valuable sources of history. The three Berlin Journals occasionally quoted in this Memoir, are conducted by the officers of Head-Quarter Staff, stationed at Berlin ; and the editorship of the Austrian Military Journal is, in fact, a Government appointment : the statements of all of them are received in Germany as perfectly authentic, and may be most fully relied upon. The influence and wide circulation of these Journals, the ability for which their contents are distinguished, and the gentleman-like tone in which they are written, give clear proof of the high degree of intelligence which now pervades the members of the military profession in Germany.

The contents of these Military Journals, down to 1838, are ably classed in *Von Gironcourt's Repertorium*, published in that year at Cassel; but the task of tracing out information through the enormous mass of what has been written in other works, on the period of which we are speaking, is certainly attended with some difficulty. And the author of this Memoir would have been greatly at a loss, had not the Director of the Royal Library at Berlin very politely given him access to the interior of that Library, where the admirable arrangement and classification of the books, enabled him to see at once what

had been written on different periods, and to take a cursory view of the works: those which he deemed of consequence, being afterwards submitted to him for more minute inspection. What use he has made of these advantages, it is now for the reader to decide.

It remains to be added, that the present Memoir, as originally written, contained the Rise as well as the Fall of Napoleon; but having greatly exceeded the limits which the Author had proposed to himself, he thought it best to cancel the First Volumes, and compress the earlier part of the history in what now forms the Introductory Book.

St Bernard's Crescent,
Edinburgh, *May* 1845.

NOTE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

The present Edition has been augmented to the extent of about forty-five pages ; some of the plans have also been engraved over again ; and the Author has endeavoured by a visit to the Continent, and by the best inquiries he could make, to improve the work as far as lay in his power.

St Bernard's Crescent,
Edinburgh, *May* 1846.

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FALL OF NAPOLEON.

INTRODUCTORY BOOK.

THE ASCENT TO POWER.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY OF BONAPARTE: NAPOLEON'S EARLY LIFE AND EARLY SERVICES.

As NAPOLEON rose from humble rank to the lofty station which he held at the period when this Memoir opens, it will be right to introduce the history of his fall by a brief sketch of his ascent to power, and of the great events that placed him on the throne. Justice to the views advocated in these pages compels us to show, as far as narrow limits permit, that there is no inconsistency between Bonaparte in prosperity and Napoleon in adversity,—between the victorious commander of early days elevated to empire on the storm-raised tide of a mighty revolution, and the haughty sovereign of later years holding boundless sway over prostrate nations, and falling from his high estate to end a captive exile on a distant island. The character and conduct displayed

are the same from first to last; the result of altered circumstances constitutes the only difference.

Napoleon Bonaparte was born at Ajaccio in Corsica, on the 15th August 1769, the very year in which the island was annexed to France, and two months after the Battle of Ponte-Novo, the last in which the island patriots attempted to face the invaders. The unjust subjugation of his native land was thus the first sight on which the future conqueror of so many realms opened his infant eyes. Napoleon was the second son of Charles Bonaparte, an advocate of some reputation, and of Letizia Ramolini, a lady of great beauty and strength of character. He had four brothers: Joseph, Lucien, Louis, and Jerome; and three sisters, Eliza, Caroline, and Pauline.

The name of Bonaparte is already found in Italian records of the fourteenth century, and appears to have belonged to families of rank and respectability. According to most historians, the ancestors of Napoleon settled in Corsica in the fifteenth century; having, as Gibellines, been expelled from Florence during the civil wars of that period. There is nothing improbable in this statement; but as it rests on no authority, the writer of the present Memoir, following authentic documents, is more disposed to trace the Corsican family to Spanish than Italian extraction: for it appears that a family of the name arriving, some say from Provence, others from Genoa, settled in the Balearic Islands, as early as the thirteenth century. They were always considered as belonging to the best families of Majorca, whence Don Hugo Bonaparte emigrated to Corsica, where, in 1411, he became President of the Council.* But whether of

* See Appendix.

Spanish or Italian origin, they always ranked with the gentry of Corsica, though evidently very poor, as we find from a letter of Charles Bonaparte to the Minister of War, that he was unable to defray the expense of educating his third son, for whom he solicits free admission to the College of Brienne. The various attempts made, by so many writers, to give Napoleon a high and noble pedigree, to connect him even with the Imperial House of Comena, must be looked upon as complete failures : had there been any foundation for these reports, the proofs could easily have been established at a time when all the archives of Europe were at his command, and when thousands, in every country, vied in efforts to attract the favourable notice of the all-powerful dispenser of rank, wealth, and honours.

Hazlitts reckons among the distinguished ancestors of Napoleon, Jacobo Bonaparte, the author of a "much esteemed narrative of the sacking of Rome by the Imperial army, in 1527 ;" and which contains an elaborate genealogy of the family of Bonaparte. "This piece," says Hazlitts, "has been ascribed to Guicciardini, and is inserted by him in his History of Italy." Now the fact is, that Jacobo Bonaparte is an obscure and unknown plagiarist, who printed as his own work the second book of "*Il Sacco di Roma, descritto in duo Libri Da Francesco Guicciardini*," as proved in the second edition of the work, printed at Cologne in 1758. These trifles would not deserve a single line of notice or refutation, were it not right to show how readily even men of talents have recorded, without examination, whatever was intended to extol Napoleon : not perceiving in their zeal how often these efforts had a different effect when justly interpreted.

In his tenth year, the young Napoleon was admitted

to the Royal Military School of Brienne, and passed on, in his fifteenth, to the Military Academy at Paris: two years afterwards he obtained a commission as second lieutenant in the artillery regiment of La Fére.

On the breaking out of the Revolution, the junior officers of engineers and artillery mostly embraced the popular party. Though men of noble birth, they did not, in general, belong to the *haute noblesse*: few emigrated, therefore; and Napoleon remained, like most of his comrades, attached to his corps, and shared in the rapid promotion occasioned by the emigration of so many officers of rank. The circumstance of the officers of the scientific branches of the service having adhered to the revolutionary cause, proved of incalculable advantage to the French armies; for no zeal, gallantry, and enthusiasm, could have supplied the want of the professional knowledge indispensable for the effectual performance of artillery and engineer duty: and the French troops were, from the first, well supplied with officers of both services.

Biographers have left the next period of Napoleon's history in some obscurity; but we find him in Corsica, and taking part against Paoli, when the latter, shocked by the excesses of the Reign of Terror, unfurled the standard of independence. The French party were at first unsuccessful, and Napoleon was obliged to fly the island. On his return to France, he settled his mother and sisters in a residence near Marseilles, and then proceeded to Paris, to seek employment and preferment.

At the period of which we are speaking, the French Revolution was at the very height of its sanguinary career. This great convulsion, the consequences of which will be seen and felt as long as the history of our time shall be known, was one mighty outbreak of living

flame, that burst asunder the whole surface of society in France; made the clefts extend far into other lands; while distant nations were not only overshowered by the fiery particles thrown out from the volcano itself, but saw the flames rising from a thousand chasms beneath their feet. The barriers that separated ranks and classes were levelled to the ground; thrones and altars were overthrown; old opinions, habits, manners, feelings and affections, swept away along with the institutions under which they had been reared. Levity aided the progress of crime, till all the fierce and demoniac passions that cling to the heart of man in its most degraded state, were let loose upon the world, in shapes more frightful than they had ever been beheld. Pike-armed bands, composed of the very dregs of the people—of the *homines stercore nati lutoque compositi* of Tacitus—governed France, Paris, and the Convention; and led the way in a career of atrocity to which history can furnish no parallel. Giant murder, "drunk with gore," strode in triumph over the smoking ruins of all that past generations had venerated; wild insanity decreed the worship of the Goddess of Reason; and raving impiety proclaimed the deposition of the Deity from the very Throne of Light and Glory.

War with Europe was one of the earliest consequences of avowed principles that led to such enormities; principles that threatened not only the subversion of all established governments, but the destruction of all the institutions most essential to the progress and maintenance of civilisation. The guilt of aggression in this great contest rests entirely with France; and though it is usual for a numerous class of writers to assert the contrary, and lay the blame on the Princes of the subsequent coalition, there is nothing more certain, and

admitting of clearer proof, than the fact,—that the cause and declaration of war both came from Paris. Our limits prevent us from exposing at length the mass of falsehood invented on this subject by the revolutionary demagogues, and circulated by their numerous advocates in every part of Europe. Truth demands, however, a few words, as it is essential to show that the spirit which marked the first revolutionary government of France, ruled supreme to the very last; was the very same, in fact, which, as we shall see, guided the conduct of Napoleon in prosperity as well as in adversity.

The state of affairs in France necessarily excited the alarm of neighbouring states; democratic principles had made considerable progress in Italy and Germany; and in a private circular from Padua, the Emperor Leopold called the attention of several continental princes to the dangerous advance of the Revolution. But his pacific disposition caused only peaceful measures to be suggested, and even these were afterwards deemed needless when Louis XVI. accepted the proposed Constitution, which the Emperor thought would lead to a return of tranquillity. No coalition against France was formed; no hostile step of any kind adopted: and the pretended treaties of Mantua and Pavia—according to which the country was to be divided among the allies—are now known to be mere fables, invented by the demagogues of Paris, and repeated by worthless as well as by credulous adherents.

Even the treaty of Pilnitz, which the same veracious authorities declared to have been concluded for the purpose of attacking the Revolution, had nothing to do with the affairs of France. The meeting of the Emperor, the King of Prussia and the Elector of Saxony, had no other object but to confirm the peaceful settlement of some differences which had arisen between

Austria and Prussia; and though it was stated in the preliminary treaty, "that the contracting parties felt deeply interested in the affairs of France,"—as well, indeed, they might,—the country is not even named, nor indeed alluded to, in the definitive treaty that followed. So far from any coalition having been formed against revolutionary France, it may be truly said, that the sovereigns were highly culpable in remaining passive and inactive till the revolutionary flame attained a height which threatened and almost achieved universal destruction; a height which was only subdued at last by the life-blood of slaughtered millions.

So openly and completely has the history of this important period been falsified by what modern times have termed "liberality," that the princes who afterwards became parties to the war against France were actually accused, and are so to this day, of having been the aggressors in the strife, though the exact reverse is the case. The declaration of war, as well as the provocation to war, came from Paris; from the Girondists—the very men who have since been so highly lauded for virtue, merely because they were less brutal than their immediate successors, the wild demagogues of the Reign of Terror. Yet these last opposed the war; not certainly from philanthropic motives, but because it was a Girondist measure, a measure of which their adversaries boasted, on which they founded their claim to power and confidence, and on the merit of which they took their principal stand when attempting to combat the Mountain, or Jacobin party that afterwards crushed them.

At first, indeed, the decrees and declaration of the Revolutionary Assemblies breathed only peace and goodwill to mankind; and such idle words, which cost nothing, gained in every country many unreflecting per-

sons to their cause. On the 22d of May 1790, they issued a solemn proclamation, to the effect that "the French people renounced for ever all wars of conquest:" and the blind and credulous multitude, delighted by so much generosity, made the words resound with acclamation in all parts of the world. The forcible seizure of the possession of the German Princes situated in Alsace, was the first comment on this philanthropic decree, and was soon followed by the occupation of Avignon and the Venaissain; measures of direct violence and aggression, which could only be defended on the revolutionary plea that "they were committed in accordance with the rights of the people, and in the cause of freedom;"—a plea by which every act of robbery was soon to be justified.

It has been a thousand times asserted in support of the accusation brought against the allied monarchs, that nations have no right to interfere in the internal affairs of other states; and, to a modified extent, the principle is perfectly just. But it is so to a modified extent only: for the law of nations sets bounds to the power which a people can exercise within their own frontier: even as the law of property controls, to some extent, the use which the possessor can make of it. No man has a right to set fire to his own dwelling, if it endanger that of his neighbour; nor can any one make his fields a receptacle for infectious compounds, capable of poisoning the surrounding lands. And the most independent nations are bound by the same principles, and can never be held justifiable in making their institutions or modes of government destructive to the peace and prosperity of other states. But the French did so; and by placing the whole power of a mighty empire in the hands of wild factions, as destitute of honour as of principle, they opened a volcano in the very centre of Europe, that threatened the destruction of the whole existing order of society. By

avowing maxims as hostile to established rules and forms as the security of property; by advancing the most arrogant pretensions, founded on plans of universal spoliation, they necessarily called upon all the neighbouring nations to take the field in defence of their possessions and institutions. That foreign nations did not take the field, that they remained tranquil, though anxious spectators of the gathering storm which afterwards burst in destruction over so many lands, is a just and heavy charge against the sovereigns of Europe: that they assailed France, and formed coalitions for the partition and subjugation of the country, is a device of the enemy totally destitute of foundation.

No sooner had the bearing of the Revolution towards other nations become the subject of debate in the Assembly, than the mask of philanthropy, which had at first been so successfully adopted, was cast aside, and the French Revolution declared to be only the signal to nations for "universal regeneration and the freedom of mankind!"

From this moment every word uttered was a declaration of war against sovereigns, or a call to rebellion addressed to their subjects. The demagogues pretended to be surrounded only by plots and conspiracies, they saw only daggers and tyrants, and slaves armed to become the assassins of freedom. Even their own sovereign was represented as a traitor, leagued with foreigners for the partition of France. Speeches and pamphlets to this effect, constantly poured out against foreign states and princes, were certain to drive peace from Europe; and it is now perfectly clear, that from the very first, the Girondist party, then at the head of affairs, wished for war as the best mode of ending and cementing the work so happily commenced. For this purpose, the upright and honourable De Lessard, the minister who

attempted to preserve peace, was driven from his post, cast into prison, and soon afterwards led to the scaffold. A passage of his letter addressed to Necker, on the 8th July 1792, a few weeks before his execution, is highly deserving of notice. "I shall ever regret," says the unfortunate man, "that my defence cannot appear at this moment, for it will be a singular document; not as it regards myself, but as it proves, by the clearest demonstration, that foreign states had no intention to attack us; as it proves beyond the possibility of reply, that we have provoked and commenced the war, and armed all Europe against us." The letters addressed by Dumouriez, then in the ministry, to Marshal Rochambeau and General Biron, the orders directing those officers to invade Belgium, first published, we believe, in Gagern's Memoirs,* tend fully to establish the truth of De Lessard's statement. And yet with the frank confessions of the revolutionary ministers themselves before the world, with ample evidence of the accuracy of their statements, we still find historians repeating idle fables about partition, treaties of Pilnitz and Mantua! On the 20th of April 1792, the French declared war against Austria; and the unprepared state of defence in which the Republican armies found the frontiers of Germany and the Netherlands, shows sufficiently how little the powers of the pretended coalition anticipated any outbreak of hostilities.

The war carried on against Austria soon extended to other nations, and the city of Toulon having placed itself under the protection of the Allied Powers, in order to escape the sanguinary oppression of the Reign of Terror, was already, in 1793, occupied by a heterogeneous force composed of Spanish, British, Sardinian, and Neapolitan

* Mein Antheil an der Politik. von H. C. Freiherrn von Gagern. Stuttgart, 1823.

troops, amounting in all to 10,000 men. The recovery of the first naval station in France became, of course, a point of vital importance with the Republican government, and 40,000 men were assembled to effect its reduction. This force was at first under the orders of General Cartaux, a painter by profession, who was soon superseded by General Doppet, a promoted surgeon, Napoleon, now a colonel, was named second in command of the artillery; and General Dummartin, the senior officer, falling sick, all the duties devolved upon him.

The fortress was invested on the 8th of September; but as the attacks were all directed against the regular works of Fort Malbosquet and the advanced redoubts of the place, no effect was produced. And it was not till the 17th December, and after three months of false measures, that batteries were opened against Fort Mulgrave, a field work which the sailors called Little Gibraltar, and which the British had constructed to secure the promontory of Le Caire; a point which, as the accompanying sketch amply shows, commands the entrance to the inner roads, and all access to the town by sea.

A field work could offer little permanent resistance to a regular attack. The post was carried by storm on the 17th December, and as the French immediately opened batteries on the shipping, the evacuation of the city could no longer be delayed.

In the St Helena Memoirs, Napoleon takes the credit of having suggested the attack on Fort Mulgrave ; and historians and biographers have repeated the assertion, assuring us at the same time, that the suggestion gave early proof of the high military genius for which he was distinguished. We see things in a different light : and cannot understand how this attack was delayed for three months ; and how regularly-educated officers of artillery and engineers could for one moment overlook the fact, that the keys of Toulon were to be found in Fort Mulgrave. Nor was any inspiration of genius required here : for every officer of the scientific corps had been taught, before he finished his first course of fortification, that the complete investment of a fortress, cutting off the besieged from all reinforcement and supplies, is the very first step towards its reduction.

Fort Mulgrave was no sooner carried than the French guns, opened from the batteries of Eguillette and Ballaguiere, told the Allies that little time was to be lost where so much was to be done.

The loyal inhabitants had to be embarked on board the allied squadron ; the French ships, stores, and arsenals, had to be destroyed ; and the troops of the garrison brought away under the very fire of the enemy, who was pressing on from every quarter. The confusion was dreadful ; the craven conduct of some of the foreign troops ; the lamentations of a whole population, men, women, and children, the young, the aged, and the infirm, leaving their native homes, to seek shelter from

the fury of their own countrymen; the screams of the wounded, the striking of shot and shells among the terrified multitudes, presented a day of horror, only surpassed by a night more appalling still. Fifteen ships of war, the arsenal and stores of every description, were given to the flames, which, ascending in mighty volumes, sent their livid glare far over the scene of ruin. The Spaniards having abandoned Fort Malbosquet before the appointed time, the Republicans turned its guns upon the city and shipping; and while their troops were already attempting to force the gates, the Jacobins and galley slaves were rising within the walls. To augment the terrors of this fearful night, the Spaniards, instead of scuttling the magazine ships which they had undertaken to sink, set them on fire. Two tremendous explosions followed this act of misconduct, and for a moment appalled both friends and foes; while masses of blazing fragments, hurled high in air, descended over the town and harbour, threatening equal destruction to all parties: the night presenting altogether one of the wildest scenes of terror which the French Revolution added to the black page of human history. But the steadiness and gallantry of British seamen faced every danger and overcame every difficulty: fourteen thousand French loyalists were conveyed on board the ships, and all the troops of the garrison safely embarked under the protection of Fort La Malgue, which was maintained to the last.

This is not the place to speak of the atrocities committed by the Republicans on the reduction of Toulon; it is enough to say that they were committed under the Reign of Terror, and fully worthy of the men who then ruled France. Napoleon, who was at this period a fiery Republican, the friend of the younger Robespierre, often

signing himself Brutus Bonaparte, has frequently been accused of having taken an active part in the cruelties exercised against the loyalists of the unhappy city. But the charge has never been substantiated. The victims of Republican vengeance, about a thousand in number, fell by the fire of musketry, as the term *fusillades*, employed in the official reports, amply testifies; and there is no reason for supposing that an officer of artillery would be employed to command infantry detachments on so dishonourable a duty.

The recapture of Toulon, though the most important victory gained by Republican France, did not, as usually asserted, bring Napoleon into any immediate notice. His name is not mentioned in any of the despatches; and at a time when even painters and surgeons were, as we have seen, placed at the head of armies, a well-educated officer, who had commanded the artillery at a successful siege, only received, after a six-weeks' delay, the non-descript rank of Brigadier-General.

The next service on which he was employed, is also at variance with the belief supposed to have been entertained of his talents; for while French armies were engaged on all the frontiers of the Republic, Napoleon was sent to inspect the coast of the Mediterranean, where no immediate danger could be apprehended.

In March 1794, we find him, however, commanding the artillery of the army of Italy; and though his name is not mentioned in the reports of the period, historians have ascribed to his suggestions all the advantages achieved by his countrymen. Nor did he long continue to hold the appointment. On the 13th July, the General commanding the artillery of the victorious army, accepted a mission to Genoa, intrusted with some ostensible communication to the government of the city, but

charged in reality to perform the honourable functions of a spy.

On his return to camp, Napoleon was placed in arrest by order of the new representatives of the people, but released at the expiration of fourteen days ; not, as historians assert, because his services were deemed too valuable to be dispensed with ; for he evidently lost his appointment, as we find him immediately afterwards at Paris, soliciting employment from Aubrey, the new minister of war.

In this attempt he failed ; and for more than a year his fortunes appear to have been at the lowest possible ebb. At one time he sought the hand of Mademoiselle de Montansier, a lady of great wealth, already far advanced in years ; but proving unsuccessful, he projected a voyage to Constantinople for the purpose of seeking service in Turkey, when the Revolution of the 13th Vendemiaire —5th October 1795—placed him at once on the very footsteps of his future throne.

The Revolution of the 9th of Thermidor had overthrown the Jacobin or Mountain faction, and brought Robespierre and his adherents to the scaffold : and the delight with which the fall of the Reign of Terror was hailed from one extremity of France to the other ; the return of all classes to better manners and better feelings ; the rapid progress of conservative and royalist principles, convinced the victorious party that they could not follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, and that a different line of conduct was necessary even for their own preservation. A new and less democratic constitution was prepared, the third since the commencement of the troubles ; and though its enactments already retrograded with gigantic steps from what were termed the principles

of the Revolution, it was received by the people, and the National Convention thus dissolved.

Having mentioned this memorable assembly, so frightfully distinguished for its crimes and enormities, it will be right to show how far its reign of blood laid the foundation for much that has been ascribed to a later period.

Victory had attended the French arms under the Convention; and Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine had been conquered and incorporated with the Republic. Holland was subdued and revolutionized, and peace concluded with Tuscany, Spain, Prussia, and the minor states of northern Germany. In the interior, the revolted provinces of the West were reduced to submission, and terror maintained tranquillity through the land. The Polytechnic School and the French Institute were founded; and the very senate, which during its brief career of power sent more victims to the scaffold than all the tyrants that history denounces to the just indignation of mankind, passed a decree, declaring that the punishment of death should cease in France, on the conclusion of a general peace. There were always some particles of greatness mixed up with the madness of these revolutionary assemblies; because in a large body of Frenchmen, there will always be a number of wise, able, and honourable men.

But though the nation at large accepted the new constitution, one of the introductory clauses, which decreed that two-thirds of the Convention should form part of the new legislature, was resisted by the National Guard at Paris. Instigated and supported by the Royalists, the Sections took arms against the government, who had not above 5000 regular troops, aided by

1700 volunteers, disposable for their protection. These forces were placed under the orders of Barras, who had dispersed the followers of Robespierre on the 9th Thermidor; and as he had known Napoleon at the siege of Toulon, he obtained for him the appointment of second in command.

Of the easy victory achieved by the regular troops over the sections, it is needless to speak. Historians as usual give the credit to Napoleon, though evidently without the least foundation: for his name is not mentioned in the first report; and we now know from Baron Fain himself, one of the Emperor's most enthusiastic admirers, that no particular merit was ascribed to him on that occasion: the whole devolved upon Barras, who really commanded the troops.

This officer, who was a man of noble birth, wanted neither courage nor talents; but, of indolent habits and addicted to pleasure, was ill calculated to act a leading and permanent part in times of revolution. And when, on the formation of the new government, he was named one of the Directors, he resigned the command of the army of the interior to Napoleon, who had been promoted to the rank of General of Division.

It was at this time that the future Emperor became acquainted with Josephine de la Pargerie, widow of the Marquis de Beauharnais, guillotined during the Reign of Terror. This lady, who was distinguished for elegant manners and a graceful figure, rather than for beauty or talents, was one of the ornaments of the court which Barras, as head of the government, held at the Luxembourg. Napoleon, captivated by her engaging manners, or influenced by her power with the Director—and the voice of scandal said it was more than legitimate power—solicited her hand. In her letters Josephine tells us, that she accepted him to secure a protector for her

children, and without entertaining the slightest affection for him. Having obtained for her future husband a promise of the command of the army of Italy, the parties were married on the 9th March 1796; and on the 27th of the same month, we already find Napoleon at Nice, at the head of the army which was ultimately to place him on the loftiest throne raised in modern times. And as his fortunes are henceforth closely connected with the events of war, it may be right here to cast a brief glance at the different armies engaged in the world-shaking contests that marked his fatal career.

The French Revolution War found the Prussian system of tactics firmly established in all the European armies. And in full reliance on its excellence, without considering that the mode of its application might go for something, and that the genius of its founder had given it a moral force which in a great measure supplied its deficiency in physical strength and consistency, the allied leaders took the field against the new Republicans. The first encounters seemed, indeed, to justify their most sanguine expectations: for Dumouriez tells us, that shortly before the action of Valmy, 10,000 of his men fled with precipitation at the mere approach of a few Prussian hussars. In order to account for the change that followed, we must here say a few words of the state and composition of the troops of the contending powers, as well as of the different spirit by which they were respectively animated.

The German armies were still composed, at the period of which we are speaking, of men raised partly by a vicious and antiquated system of conscription, which had degenerated into a mere source of corruption; and partly by recruits enlisted with, or rather kidnapped by, the aid of money which the captains of companies

received for discharges granted to the best and most respectable men, and for the furloughs regularly sold to the most trust-worthy of those who remained. And in services in which the regular pay of the officers was very small, and where promotion went by seniority or interest only, it was natural for those captains to make as much money by this traffic as possible ; and provided they had the requisite number of men, they were not very scrupulous as to the quality. In all the German armies, the captains of companies were comparatively wealthy. In the Prussian service, a company of infantry was worth about 800 dollars a-year, nearly L.200 ; an enormous sum for the time and country, and an ample proof of the value of the entire system.

The manner also in which these men were trained and treated was worthy of the manner in which they were raised. Their system of tactics we know, for we follow it even to this day : but the length and severity of their drill, deemed necessary to obtain mechanical precision in the performance of useless movements—the endless and rigid minuteness of frivolous duty—harassed the men to an extent that would hardly obtain belief if attempted to be described. When added to the constant repetition of corporal punishment inflicted with inhuman severity, these martinet practices formed a system more than sufficient to crush every generous and elastic feeling of the heart—every mental and bodily energy, and to reduce the soldier to the mere worthless trigger-pulling machine of theoretical tacticians.

The very dress of these unfortunate men inflicted martyrdom on the wearers ; their pay was barely sufficient to keep body and soul together while in the service, and as they were left almost totally destitute in old age, the profession was naturally looked upon with

dread by all who were liable to serve, and with hatred and aversion by all who were in the ranks. Measures of the utmost severity were necessarily adopted to prevent desertion. As soon as a soldier was missed, guns were fired and the bells were tolled, in signal to the peasantry to search the country; and woe to the man who harboured, or even concealed any knowledge of a deserter. As self-mutilation was punished by many years' imprisonment or by hard labour in chains, suicide became at one time so common in the Prussian army, that the eloquence of the pulpit was called in to check the melancholy practice. Most of the captains, and many of the subalterns of these armies were, for their rank, old men without experience—the very worst description of officers: for they had lost the hope, spirit, and buoyance of youth, so necessary to all subordinates in the trying profession of arms, without having had the means of acquiring any practical knowledge in exchange. The field-officers, when not very old men, who still dated from the Seven Years' War, were mostly persons promoted in consequence of superior influence; and, as is too often the case in our own country, with a total disregard to professional merit. The hosts so composed and officered—for all the German armies were formed on the Prussian model—were commanded either by old Generals who had served under or against Frederick II., or by young princes or nobles of high rank, who, owing to a thirty years' peace, were necessarily destitute of experience, and whose knowledge was confined to what they had witnessed at the Potsdam reviews; for the military renown of Frederick was at this time so overwhelming, as completely to crush beneath its weight every military thought and idea not to be found in his books, or regulations.

From armies so composed and commanded, which were never very numerous, and were besides supplied by a worthless commissariat, no very brilliant actions could be expected. Still the very circumstances of strife that relieved the men from the ordinary routine of suffering peace duty, and to a certain extent struck off the shackles that a false system of discipline imposed on the natural bravery of the German soldier, led to the performance of actions, that, if properly followed up and improved, might have produced the most decisive results. But the confidence of the leaders sank before the first obstacles, just as the spirit of their men was rising; and the individual courage of the soldier will effect little when not properly backed by the mental courage and spirit of his commander.

One of the main causes that aided the progress of the French Republican and Imperial armies,—of the Revolution itself indeed,—may be found in the fact, that there was not, when the war commenced, a single man of eminent talents at the head of any of the continental cabinets or armies. Soldiers and statesmen were still the blind disciples of Frederick the Great; they were upright and honourable men no doubt, but are never placed by history above the level of ordinary mediocrity; and were ill calculated, therefore, to act leading parts in extraordinary times.

The British troops, though the first to check the soldiers of revolutionary France, were the last with whom they came into decisive contact. Under the administration of Mr Pitt, England had recovered from the losses sustained during the ill-conducted American War, but had derived no military knowledge from the fatal contest. Her resources had improved; but her armies were feeble in numbers, and wretched in organ-

ization. This was owing partly to the antiquated notion, that regular armies are dangerous to constitutional freedom; and partly also to the mistaken belief, that an insular and commercial nation can require maritime forces only, and is independent of trained and disciplined soldiers. The practice of selling military rank was also attended with injurious consequences. This practice, derived from the dark ages, long abolished in every other country in Europe, and disgraceful to an enlightened nation, caused, and still causes, the science of arms to be so entirely disregarded in Britain, that there is not at this day a single known work on the higher branches of the art of war in the English language, though the richest of all modern languages in every other department of literature. Young men of fortune, conscious that they could purchase preferment, were most indifferent to professional matters; and the less wealthy, fully aware that knowledge and merit would be of no avail without money, were ready enough to prefer amusement to study, and trust to chance for professional success. Military knowledge—from the knowledge required by governments and War Ministers, showing the services on which troops can be effectually employed, down to the knowledge required for commanding regiments, companies, and armies—was therefore totally wanting.

The Duke of York did much to remove the abuses that had crept into the service; he also improved the discipline, and introduced the German uniform system of exercise into the army. But his military ideas had been formed exclusively at the Potsdam reviews, under Frederick II., where unfortunately he imbibed all the martinet notions that distinguished the Prussian school in the latter years of the great monarch, without per-

ceiving that many of the practices then in vogue were more vexatious than beneficial; while others again, though well suited perhaps to Prussian troops, were totally at variance with the best martial qualities of our people.

The almost unparalleled succession of failures and disappointments that marked the first fifteen years of the war, was the consequence of these professional and political errors. Except at Fontenoy and Almanza, the soldiers of England had never been defeated in fair and open battle-field; many enterprises had failed, commanders had been foiled, but the soldiers had never been vanquished. And yet such was the evil fortune attending the British arms during the early part of the great Revolutionary contest, that with this fact clearly established by history, a belief arose in England, was repeated by entire parties, by senators and legislators, and loudly cheered in France,—a belief, we say, that the unconquered soldiers of England could not fight.

In regard to the navy, Britain was more fortunate. The conduct of the government had indeed been as culpable towards this department of the service as towards the army. Many of the ships were hardly sea-worthy; the *materiel* was insufficient in quantity and indifferent in quality; and the working of the whole system was faulty in the extreme: but the commercial marine of the empire, then at the height of prosperity, had reared up a class of seamen who more than atoned for every deficiency. The skill, gallantry, and daring of these men; their buoyant and elastic spirits, athletic power, energy and resources in danger; their perseverance under difficulties, exceed all praise: they stand alone in the history of wars, perfect models of the noble class to

which they belong. Whether the navy had profited by the difficult lessons of the American war, or retained the spirit lighted up by so many events of the contest, we shall not pretend to say; but certain it is, that from the very commencement of hostilities, they brought with them to the contest the most decided superiority over all the adversaries they were called upon to encounter. Victory seemed to have settled permanently on the British flag: there was nothing practicable that British sailors were not ready to attempt, and nothing that could be deemed above their skill and courage. No enemy was too numerous, no position too formidable to be assailed; and independently altogether of the great naval victories gained by fleets and squadrons, the battles fought against single ships, and the exploits performed in boating expeditions, furnish a train of noble actions, unsurpassed in the collected annals of human daring and heroism.

The French army having formed the real lever that raised Napoleon to power, requires of course some particular notice here. The Revolution had completely disorganized the troops; and France could only oppose numbers to the powdered, pipe-clayed, and well-drilled armies of Germany: but these numbers were at first inspired with the idea of contending for liberty, and the independence of their country. The absence of all tactical regulations naturally made the soldiers resort to the mode of fighting most congenial to their character and disposition. The scarcity of officers left the doors of honour and preferment constantly open to merit and enterprise, whilst enthusiasm easily found remedies for every deficiency. The commanders, too, knowing that their lives depended on success, were neither scrupulous nor deficient in boldness, and spared

not the men whom revolutionary decrees, backed by the guillotine, sent in myriads to the ranks. The demagogues of the Convention placed every Frenchman capable of carrying arms in requisition for the service of the state ; fourteen armies were raised, and 1,100,000 soldiers brought into the field. Such numbers, inspired by the wild dream of freedom, and not unfrequently aided by skill and ability, were of course more than a match for the feeble armies and miserable system of tactics on which the allies had alone founded their hope of success, and which, as it proved, they did not even know how to use. Inferior in cavalry and artillery,—in which the Imperial armies afterwards surpassed all the armies of Europe,—the first Republicans placed their principal reliance on infantry ; and, unable to move with the regularity of their enemies, they formed large masses, covered with *tirailleurs* ; and wisely avoiding the open country, fought only on broken ground, and in villages, where their peculiar mode of warfare, and the natural intelligence of the French soldier told to the greatest advantage. They arose from their defeats with renewed vigour, gained victories in their turn—and none are more elated by success than Frenchmen. The Allies, astonished at this new system, of which no mention was made in their books, committed the great fault of meeting the Republicans on their own terms ; and instead of availing themselves of the advantages they might have derived from the discipline of their infantry, and the superiority of their cavalry and artillery, fell into the *tirailleur* system of their enemies, in which the latter had, from the very circumstances that brought them to the field, the most decided advantage.

It must also be allowed, that these first Republican

armies were, in spirit, composition, and honourable feeling, far superior to the best of their successors; and old French officers, who served in the campaigns of 1793 and 1794, and afterwards rose to rank under Napoleon, always spoke with more respect of these early soldiers of the Revolution than of the Imperial Guard itself.

Though arbitrary levies had been raised in France from the commencement of the Revolution, it was only in December 1798 that the regular conscription law, which remained in force down to the very restoration of the Bourbons, was passed by the Directory. According to this sanguinary and despotic enactment, every male between 18 and 25 years of age was called upon to do military duty. The first conscription list for the year included all under the age of 21; and the result of the ballot within this class amounted to nearly 80,000 names. But if the service of the state demanded a farther supply, the lists of those aged 22, 23, 24, and 25, were successively resorted to. There was no exception; and according to the original law, no one was allowed to purchase a substitute; but Napoleon, wishing to gain favour with the wealthy classes, altered this clause when he became First Consul, and allowed service by proxy:—an indulgence which, owing to the venality of French authorities, occasioned a traffic in human flesh more repulsive than was ever presented by the African slave-trade.

Such a system of conscription, though attended with countless evils, inflicting with its sanguinary fangs frightful sufferings on the people, could not fail to produce a mass of brave, able, and intelligent soldiers; surpassing, in many respects, those of the other armies of continental Europe, generally composed, as we have seen, of the most unfortunate refuse of the population.

The French authorities, however corrupt, were imperatively bound to furnish the requisite number of recruits; and as the enormous sums demanded for substitutes prevented all but the very wealthy from availing themselves of this method of exemption, young men of the best families were obliged to serve as private soldiers; so that every corps and regiment counted in its ranks a number of men of education and superior attainments, certain to exercise some influence on the character of the heterogeneous mass of which they formed part. And it was this influence, and the naturally good disposition of the men, that redeemed, to some extent at least, Napoleon's Vandal system of war, its plundering requisitions, and dark list of accompanying crimes.

The wild life of camps, so attractive to the young and the active, the habit of ruling with absolute authority in foreign countries, soon tended to reconcile the conscript to the profession; which was, besides, the high road to wealth, honour, and distinction. No reward seemed, indeed, beyond the reach of Napoleon's soldiers; domains, pensions, decorations, principalities, were distributed with lavish hand; and the humblest musketeer in the ranks could point to peer, prince, and marshal, who had been his predecessor in the lowly station in which he toiled, and from which he too might expect to rise by deeds of gallantry and daring.

The manner also in which the contests were carried on tended greatly to influence the character of the armies. The Republican and Imperial governments, that never spared the lives of Frenchmen, were not likely to be sparing of their adversaries. Conquered provinces were plundered without mercy, and treated with ruthless severity. All the received customs and courtesies of war were disregarded; neutral rights

scorned ; whatever could aid the hand of violence was seized without remorse, and whatever could check the march of conquest levelled without hesitation.

A nation taking the field with such principles of action, had advantages of which no other state could avail itself. The established governments of Europe, absolute as those of the Continent were, could not divest themselves of the shackles which law, justice, the rights of property, and the very institutions to which they owed their existence, imposed upon them. They fought therefore to disadvantage, even from the first. Nor were the military measures of the allied cabinets better calculated to effect the objects in view, than the armies they sent into the field ; not a single power evinced resolution to commence the attack ; all were successively and unwillingly forced into the contest. Even the French declaration against Austria, which could never, except under the most extravagant delusion, be looked upon as any thing but a clear proof of the aggressive spirit of the Revolution, failed to dispel the unfortunate lethargy. Spain, Holland, England, Sardinia, remained as inactive as the German princes had been,—remained deaf to insults and provocations, and adopted no measure of energy or precaution, till forces were actually marched, and declarations of war thundered forth against them. That the powers thus driven into the field acted without concert may be well believed ; and deceived by the representation of the emigrants, believing also that long continued anarchy had consumed the strength of France, they employed means totally inadequate to the object,—insufficient to effect any thing against so powerful a people as the French. They forgot in their blindness, that "men and steel" may remain where laws and institutions have been destroyed, and

that nations are rarely found more formidable in foreign war than when nerved to the contest by the toils of civil strife. The natural consequence of these errors, which jealousies tended still farther to augment, was, that the Republicans were victorious on all points ; crossed the Alps and the Rhine ; and in the first campaign already carried their *tricolor* flag to the banks of the Scheldt on one side, and to the *Riviera* of Genoa on the other. And if in after years Napoleon's eagles winged their flight far, very far, beyond these narrow limits,—if they tore with bloody talons the most distant, as well as the fairest fields of Europe, it must still be admitted, that much of their fatal success was due to the impulse which the French arms derived from the earliest events of the war.

CHAPTER II.

ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS: EXPEDITION TO EGYPT; 18TH BRUMAIR AND CONSULATE.

THE army of which Napoleon now assumed the command consisted of 43,000 effective men. Besides this force, the French had a reserve of 10,000 men at Toulon, and 20,000 more under General Kellerman, threatening Piedmont from the north, and termed the army of the Alps. Though the commander of the army of Italy had no control over these two corps, they lent him nevertheless most essential aid, for they obliged the Sardinian government to detach 20,000 men, under the Prince of Carignano, to protect the northern frontier of the kingdom.

The Allied army, composed of Austrians, Sardinians, and Neapolitans, was considerably stronger, and amounted to 57,000 men; not including the troops that confronted the French army of the north.

All accounts of the Italian campaigns agree in stating, that the new General, on taking the command of the French army, found himself at the head of a half-starved force, numerically inferior to the enemy, cooped up in a barren corner of Piedmont, and nearly destitute of all the necessaries that could render troops efficient. By the same writers, the Allies are represented as being in the most perfect state of equipment, well provided with

every thing, and commanded by the most experienced officers in Europe.

These statements are singularly illustrative of the manner in which military history has generally been written in modern times: they contain much that is true, and are yet so imperfect, that they lead to inferences exactly the reverse of those which a full knowledge of the facts tends clearly to establish. The case stands thus.

The allied armies amounted to 57,000 men, and were thus superior to the French, who had only 43,000 ; but their superiority consisted principally in cavalry and artillery, the least useful arms in a mountainous country. They were also better supplied than the French ; but these boasted supplies were not of the kind that produce any favourable effect on the health, strength, and spirits of the troops. It was not at that time the custom for continental governments to release their soldiers from the constant state of half famine to which they were regularly condemned ; so that these vaunted supplies consisted of nothing more than the useless stores with which the armies of the period so constantly encumbered themselves, but which contributed nothing to the well-being of the men. On the contrary, we know from many a well-authenticated statement, that the troops suffered severely from want and privation, stationed as they were along the high and barren ridges of the Appenines. Sickness had made great ravages in the ranks ; and the *morale* of the army was, in consequence of their situation and previous defeats, at a very low ebb. A few months only before the opening of the campaigns, Marshal Colli, the Commander of the Piedmontese army, actually declared that his troops were totally unfit to meet the enemy.

The French were hungry and in rags, but they were the enthusiastic soldiers of the Revolution, drawn from the best men of France. Many were still honest believers in the dream of freedom; a far greater number were animated by accounts of the spoil and fame acquired by the Republican conquerors of Holland and Belgium; and all were eager to share in the flesh-pots of Italy. Is it not evident to common understanding, that far more was to be achieved with such a fiery multitude, than with the mere drilled soldiers of Austria—the paupers in uniform already described—who saw nothing in the past, present, or future, to stimulate them to exertion?

In regard to Generals, the advantage was also on the side of the French, independently even of the superior talents claimed for Napoleon. The latter was in the twenty-seventh, Beaulieu in the seventy-second year of his age. A new and splendid career, in which crowns and dictatorships were to be gained by daring and enterprise, was opening to the former: the career of the latter had almost attained to its natural close. Napoleon had received a good military education, which the world-shaking events of the Revolution had developed: Beaulieu was the disciple of the pipe-clay and button-stick school, which for upwards of fifty years had so successfully exerted itself to cramp the limbs, fetter the minds, and crush the very souls of all ranks of military men. Napoleon was at least the equal of the rulers of France, who were besides partly indebted to him for their very power, which his sword had assisted to uphold on the 13th Vendemiaire—5th October 1795,—against the revolted Sections. Beaulieu, on the other hand, was the servant of an ancient and venerated Imperial Dynasty, the very prejudices of which commanded re-

spect; and was also the unhappy tool of a deaf and blind Aulic Council. Napoleon was perfectly well acquainted with the Appenines, where he had served as chief of the artillery during the campaign of 1794: whereas his adversary was totally ignorant of mountain warfare. Beaulieu was nevertheless an officer of some merit: he had fought with distinction in the Netherlands, and was far above the mere martinet of the school to which he belonged. But this was not enough against adversaries who brought the full unshackled force of a revolutionary people to the field; it was not even enough to obtain for him the confidence of his own army; for a party was formed against him almost immediately on his assuming the command.

Napoleon again was by birth, knowledge, and education, the superior of the officers he came to command: for Massena, Augereau, Joubert, Serrurier, though brave and daring leaders, were only rough, ignorant, and illiterate men; and the new General gained the hearts of the soldiers by his very first address, worded in the real French style of the period. It promised spoil and glory, and could not possibly fail of success.

It would be utterly impossible, in a brief introduction like the present, to give the reader the faintest sketch of the Italian campaigns, or to expose the incredible and extravagant exaggerations of which historians have been guilty in describing them. All that can be said here is, that from the very first, the French displayed the active and fiery energy, the recklessness of consequences, which distinguished the Republican armies of the period. The subordinate leaders evinced on every occasion a spirit of enterprise, a thirst for victory, that atoned for every error, and remedied every disaster. And when Napoleon already wavered, after his repulse

on the Carsaglio, his Generals assembled in a council of war, seeing that victory alone could save them from destruction, urged him on to the renewed efforts, which were ultimately crowned with the most brilliant success.

On the side of the Allies different conduct led to different results. Hesitation, error, and tardiness, marked every step. The troops, though greatly discouraged by the defeats sustained during the previous campaigns, still fought bravely, and were often victorious; but the skill and energy necessary to profit by their valour was constantly wanting. Nor were timidity and vacillation confined to commanders; it extended to Princes and Cabinets, who, blinded by fear, checked even the best efforts of their Generals. The Sardinian government, alarmed by the first reverses of the campaign before any serious loss had been sustained, dreading, it is said, a Republican movement in the capital, signed the treaty of Cherasco, and left the Austrians alone in the field at the very moment when the French army was in a position of the greatest possible danger. Some of the minor states refused to take a part in the contest, and were ruined in the storm which they expected to avert by their trembling neutrality. Others, like Venice, delayed taking arms till the power of Austria was broken, and were then crushed in their turn, as a reward of their pusillanimity.

The people of Italy had unfortunately to pay for the feebleness of their rulers. The robberies committed by the French soldiers, who lived by requisition, at free quarters in fact, knew no bounds. Equally disgraceful was the rapacity displayed by the officers; while the deliberate and premeditated treachery shown by the *Correspondence** to have been practised by the General

* Correspondence Inédite Officielle et Confidentielle de Napoléon Bonaparte, 7 vols. 8vo, Paris, 1819.

and the Directory, was in the most perfect keeping with the conduct of the subordinates. And when the sufferers, exasperated by insult and oppression, flew to arms and attacked the invaders, the latter, released from all semblance of moderation, avenged these acts of hostility by deeds of cruelty not surpassed during the wildest inroads of Huns and Vandals. The barbarians burned and butchered; but it remained for French commanders to proclaim to the people of Romagna "what had been the fate of the wives and daughters of the slaughtered men of Lugo, and to warn them how they roused the French volcano."

The savage cruelties exercised against the insurgents of Pavia, Lugo, Benasco, and the Imperial Fiefs, cast a dark and deep stain on the character of their author; for, independently of the ruthless nature of the deeds themselves, they were committed at a moment, when the most splendid success at the very outset of his career ought surely to have awakened some generous feeling in the most callous heart, or called forth some high and gallant disdain of feeble foes; but not a single exalted sentiment could be awakened, nor a single spark of noble fire kindled in the cold clay of which the heart of Napoleon was formed. When in 1814 the throne of this ignoble man was threatened, when his own possessions were in danger, he then taunted the peasantry of the south of France with their want of patriotism, with inertness in refraining to sweep the British invaders from the soil of the Great Empire! When his own cause was at stake, he called upon the foresters of the Vosgues to "hunt the allied soldiers to death, even as they would hunt so many wolves;" called upon his own people to repeat the deeds for which he had butchered the unhappy Lombards and Romagnese. And yet this is the man for whose benefit history is to be most shame-

fully falsified, and before whose fame generations are desired to bow their heads down to the very dust!

The French having forced the passage of the Po, defeated the Austrian rear-guard at Lodi, and driven Beaulieu's army from the line of Mincio, now attacked Mantua in form. The fortress was within a few days of its fall, when the arrival of Marshal Wurmser with 46,000 men, which Napoleon and his biographers have augmented to 80,000, raised the siege, and led to the battle of Castiglione,—the first in the series of actions that obtained for the victor the appellation of the "Man of Destiny," and gave rise to the fatal and too often repeated assertion, "that it was vain to contend against his fortune." And yet we find him displaying on this very occasion a want of firmness and decision amounting to absolute feebleness.

The advanced corps of the French had been driven back, with some loss, by the Austrian van, and Napoleon was, it seems, so dispirited by these trifling reverses, so completely broken down, deprived of all power of acting and deciding, that at a council of war, held at Roverbello, on the 30th July, he could come to no resolution, and spoke only of retiring across the Po. It was on the urgent remonstrance of Augereau that the resolution of marching against the enemy was adopted. The upholders of Bonaparte have, of course, denied the accuracy of this statement, declaring that the Commander-in-Chief was only desirous of ascertaining the sentiments of his officers: but such puerilities should deceive no one; and the conduct ascribed to him tallies so much with his behaviour on other occasions, that we cannot possibly reject the account so strictly maintained by the friends of General Augereau. Like all little-minded men, Napoleon was arrogant in the hour of pro-

sperity, but in moments of peril he was often weak in the extreme, wanting resources himself, and ready to lean on any arm held out to his support: here bold counsel was given and boldly followed, but we shall see the feeble as readily adopted.

This resolution led to the battles of Lonato and Castiglione, in which the French were successful; but the time lost by their first hesitation prevented them from saving the stores, battering-train and works; the former were captured, and the latter demolished by Marshal Wurmser, when he entered the besieged fortress. This officer's subsequent retreat, however, proclaimed the French victorious; and the boundless admiration and astonishment excited in Europe by the termination of this second act of the Italian drama, caused the world to overlook the most essential feature of the whole transaction. Lost in wonder of what is termed the resplendent genius of Napoleon, and looking in scorn on his unhappy adversary, they forgot that the despised and defeated commander, whose many errors were no doubt evident enough, was nevertheless the one who had principally succeeded in his object, and obtained the greatest share of advantages for the cause which he supported: and yet such is the fact. Mantua was within a few days of its fall when Wurmser's advance commenced; he raised the siege, and captured the battering-train, which could not be replaced, and thus rendered all means of reducing the fortress, except by the slow process of a blockade, absolutely impossible. To have counterbalanced this advantage gained by the Austrians, Napoleon ought to have achieved a victory over Wurmser that should have laid the Tyrol, and Germany itself, open to invasion: but no such victory was gained, whatever the French may assert to the contrary, as their army was

chained down to the banks of the Adige for more than six months afterwards.

The many errors of the Cabinet of Vienna, which hurried discouraged, feeble, and half-organized armies forward to the relief of Mantua, when the fortress was in no immediate danger, can be as little related here as the errors of the Generals. The Austrians were defeated at Bassano, foiled at Arcole, and routed at Rivoli, where the mere appearance of a few horsemen charging a body of skirmishers, occasioned a wild and general panic, which carried the whole of Alvinzy's army in confusion from the field. On the 2d of February, Mantua, left to its fate, capitulated after a brave defence of eight months; a period of time, which, if wisely employed, might, as the parties were then situated, have turned the scale completely against the French. But every move made by the Austrian government, during these important operations, justifies the remark of Mr Pitt, who said at the time, "That Austria was always a year, an army, or an idea, in arrear."

The generous manner in which the Austrian Minister, Baron Thugut, received Marshal Wurmser, on his return from this unfortunate campaign, deserves to be mentioned here, as it offers a striking contrast to the conduct so often pursued by Napoleon during his days of prosperity. Great and grave errors, which had cost the House of Austria very dear, might have been charged against the unhappy commander; but the minister, so far from using reproaches, interrupted the veteran's expressions of grief by the following speech:—"Cæsar," he said, "conquered, Cæsar was conquered, but was still Cæsar!" Graceful words, rendered doubly so by being addressed to the unfortunate.

In the short campaign of 1797, Napoleon was opposed

to the Arch-Duke Charles, who had been sent with reinforcements from Germany, to arrest the progress of the Conqueror of Italy; but his forces were unequal to the task; and finding himself unable to hold the line of the Tagliamento, he fell back into the interior of Austria; and the Cabinet of Vienna, discouraged by so many disasters, seeing the very capital of the empire threatened, solicited a truce, and entered into negotiations which ended in the treaty of Campo-Formio.

It has long been the opinion of military men, that the Austrians here yielded at the very time when they should have persevered; for at the moment when they signed the armistice of Leoben, the French had been expelled the Tyrol, General Laudon was advancing into Italy, another Austrian corps had recaptured Trieste, and the Venetians were in arms on the Adige; so that Napoleon's communication was already completely intercepted. By their submission on this occasion, the Imperial Cabinet set the example of that readiness to yield at the very time when the brave should strike home, which was so fatally followed in after years.

Having crushed Venice, as a reward for its craven conduct—as a reward also for its willing blindness in allowing itself to be duped by his falsehood and treachery—the conqueror established himself at Passaniano, where the preliminary treaty of Campo-Formio was negotiated. And here we already find Count Cobenzl struck by the rude vulgarity of Napoleon's manner, and by that malignant and revengeful disposition of character which was so often and so clearly displayed in the course of his after-life.* The preliminaries of Campo-Formio having been ratified at Radstat, the successful negotiator proceeded to Paris, where he was received

* Lebensbilder aus dem Befreiungskriege. Jena, 1844.

with the most boundless enthusiasm; and where he already appeared as the very superior of the government by which he was employed.

And yet we learn from Bourrienne, that he was a moody and dissatisfied man, brooding over the prospect of future inactivity, and irritated by the attacks of journalists and pamphleteers; a proof, in our estimation, that the best elements of greatness were entirely wanting in his character. Had he possessed elastic feelings, or buoyant spirits, they must surely have been awakened by the dazzling success he had experienced, and would have shown themselves in bright hilarity and generous deeds, offspring of the noble emotions that such a career could not fail to excite in a noble heart: for cold, barren, and worthless indeed must be the soil whence the sun of prosperity can call forth neither fruit nor flowers.

Many wild and confused projects had, as we know from the *Correspondence*, passed through Napoleon's mind during the Italian campaigns. Though all marked by a total disregard of every principle of justice and morality, as well as by a confusion of ideas singularly at variance with the opinion usually entertained of the writer, they have all one object—the acquisition of spoil and dominion—clearly and distinctly in view. Among these projects was one for the conquest of Egypt, already contemplated by the French government under Louis XV., and now resumed by the Directory; but whether for the purpose of employing their too popular General at a distance from France, or under the impression that benefit would be derived to their cause from such an enterprise, seems uncertain. Formidable armaments were assembled, and on the 19th of May the aspiring conqueror sailed from Toulon with 13 ships of the line,

11 frigates, and 400 transports, conveying 40,000 tried soldiers to the land of the Pharaohs.

Having escaped the British fleet, and reduced Malta, the African shore was gained, and a landing effected; the unorganized and undisciplined Turks, totally unprepared for the hostile visit, making but slight resistance. Alexandria was carried by assault, and the wild swarms of Mameluke cavalry driven into Upper Egypt after having been defeated in a skirmish, termed the Battle of the Pyramids. While preparing for this action, Napoleon addressed to his army the well-known proclamation: "Soldiers, recollect that from the summit of yonder monuments forty ages look down upon you!" Words constantly held up to our admiration, though not possessing a particle of ordinary meaning by which they can be recommended. The victors of the Pyramids having entered Cairo without meeting any opposition, were soon in possession of the whole country; all resistance in the open field having ceased on the defeat of the Mamelukes.

It is very evident that Napoleon undertook the expedition to Egypt with some confused notion of Eastern empire or dominion; but the wretched aspect of the land having dissolved the pleasing dream, he became anxious to carry the army back to Europe. The battle of Aboukir, and the destruction of the French fleet, having rendered this impracticable, it was found necessary to organize the conquest, and improve the situation of the invaders. And it has, of course, been asserted that his Eastern government was so able and meritorious as to obtain for him the title of the "Just Sultan:" though we now know from the best possible authority, that the measures of this Sultan, and of his Beys, as the Generals were termed, were deemed so fiercely oppressive, as to

cause the sanguinary revolts which soon followed their arrival. The *Ordonnateur en Chef* D'Aure, a decided advocate of Napoleon, is forced, in his reply to Bourrienne, to make the following rather unfortunate confession. The secretary had asserted that the Commander-in-Chief, aware of the exactions of his subordinates, often made them refund part of their ill-gotten spoil for the benefit of the military chest. This the *Ordonnateur* treats with bitter irony. "Monsieur de Bourrienne knows very well," he says, "that these Beys would not have submitted to such treatment, and understood perfectly how to keep and defend their portions of the booty. It is true that their exactions led to a catastrophe of which M. Bourrienne gives a very unsatisfactory account: I mean the insurrection at Cairo. He ascribes it to the Firman of the Grand Seignior, which may, no doubt, have had some share in producing it; but this was not the main cause. The outbreak was occasioned by measures that irritated and maddened the great body of the people. We brought our fiscal regulations with us to Egypt: we taxed property, labour, income, industry of every kind, and made use of every financial regulation known in Europe, and thus exasperated the inhabitants. As long as the question was only about the Prophet and his Islam, they submitted quietly; but the moment their property was assailed they spared nothing. The insurrection was the rising of a whole people resolved to defend their possessions."

D'Aure supports his statement by quotations from Abdul Rahmun Effendi, son of the Ulema of Cairo, and himself attached to the service of a mosque, who, in his account of the "Liberation of Egypt," declares that it was "the tyranny of the French, and their system of taxation, which occasioned the revolt. A system," he

says, "the object of which was to legalize robbery, and which placed the property of every individual at the mercy of French commissioners."

The fierce insurrection occasioned by the tyranny of the invaders having been suppressed, even as those of Lugo and Pavia had been, full scope was given to the Egyptian Reign of Terror. A number of prisoners had been confined in the dungeons of the citadel of Cairo in consequence of the troubles, and were now led to death by successive parties. Napoleon tells us himself, that from ten to twenty were decapitated every night, and thrown into the Nile—murdered, in fact: for midnight executions can hardly deserve any better name. Nor did these murders and robberies cease here; and the sixth volume of the *Correspondence Inédite et Confidentielle* is full of orders, directing individuals to be shot without trial or ceremony; some accused "*prevenu*" of having carried arms against the French, others of having spoken against them, and some for travelling without passports. Eastern tyranny is even called in to aid revolutionary robbery; many persons are ordered to be imprisoned till they purchase their liberation with large sums of money; others are literally put to death because unable to raise the sums demanded of them. History imposes a heavy and painful task upon the writer who, in the cause of truth, is forced to record a succession of such crimes.

The reasons which led to the invasion of Syria are not very clear; for those which Napoleon assigns are totally undeserving of notice. At the head of 12,000 men and fifty pieces of field artillery, he crossed the desert, and reduced the petty fort of El-Arish; the soldiers suffering great privations during the march, and venting bitter invectives against the

Republic and the *Savans*, against all whom they looked upon as the authors of the expedition. Jaffa was taken by storm ; about 3000 men of the garrison are said to have fallen in the combat ; 4000 more, composed mostly of Arnauts and Albanians, took post in a large stone *Caravansary*, and continued to defend themselves ; but offered to surrender on condition that their lives should be spared. The terms were acceded to, and the prisoners marched out to the French camp, where their appearance immediately excited the displeasure of Napoleon, who reprimanded his aides-de-camp, Eugene Beauharnais and Crossier, for having received their submission ; not knowing, he said, "what he should do with them." The lives of his own soldiers, who must have perished in destroying these men when driven to despair, never, it seems, entered his thoughts. During two days the captives, tied together with cords, were kept in front of the French tents, while a council of war pretended to deliberate on the manner in which they were to be disposed of. On the third day they were marched to some sand-hills near the sea, and shot by musketry ; those who were at first only wounded being afterwards despatched with the bayonet. The execution lasted a considerable time ; the victims met their fate in stern and silent composure, nor was the least attempt made to avert the unjust doom by unmanly wailings or entreaty,—those of superior station encouraging their followers to behave in a manner worthy the faith they deemed divine ; and nobly and bravely were the exhortations obeyed even unto death. The bones of these unhappy men, bleached by suns and tempests, continued for years to whiten the sands where they fell, and to attest the truth of a tale so black and hideous, that Europe, familiar as it is with

crimes of every dye, long refused to credit the commission of a deed so far exceeding all the known bounds of human atrocity.

Lightly as Napoleon treats this wholesale murder in his letters—lightly as it is treated by too many French writers, and by his worshippers in general—it can neither be palliated by sophistry, nor effaced by time: it will but darken in the progress of years, stand conspicuous in the midst of surrounding crime by its unmatched excess of hideousness, and cast even a shade on the generation which could utter the name of its author without loathing and abhorrence. "It might almost seem," says Sir Walter Scott, "that heaven set its vindictive brand upon this deed of butchery; for about the time it was committed the plague broke out in the army."

Though victorious in the battle of Mount Tabor, fought against some swarms of undisciplined Syrians, Napoleon was foiled before Acre, and obliged to retire into Egypt. The siege of this now secondary fortress calls for no particular notice, except that it furnishes a plain illustration of the system of war pursued by Napoleon from first to last. The attacks consisted of a succession of fierce assaults directed against the breach; but on no one occasion was the slightest attempt made to aid the assaulting columns by feints or escalades, capable of calling off the besieged, or weakening the efforts of the defenders on the most important points. Every thing was here, as on all occasions, trusted to the bravery of the troops; and it is in vain that we seek in Napoleon's career for a single instance of wisdom having retrieved a day when valour had failed.

The siege having lasted two months, and cost the army 3000 men, was ultimately obliged to be raised. Before the last assault, we find Napoleon thus express-

ing himself to Bourrienne: "I see," he said, "that this paltry place has cost me much time and many men, but things are too far advanced for us to recede without another effort. If I succeed, as I expect, I shall find the treasures of the Pasha, and arms for 300,000 men. I shall then arm and revolutionize all Syria, indignant at the cruelty of Dejzzar, whose destruction, as you perceive, the people solicit from God whenever an assault is attempted. I march on Damascus and Aleppo. I augment my army by all the discontented in the country. I arrive at Constantinople with these armed masses, and overthrow the Turkish Empire. I shall found a new empire in the East, which will fix my station in history; and may possibly return to Paris by Adrianople and Vienna, after destroying the House of Austria." This speech, uttered at a time when the population of all the surrounding districts was in arms against the French, when not a single Mussulman had forsaken his allegiance to join the invaders, and when insurrections were still breaking out in Egypt, can only be looked upon as a gigantic rhodomontade; the first in a series of similar effusions we shall yet have to record.

Want, thirst, and disease, pursued the baffled French back to Cairo; but the sufferings of the soldiers made no impression on the heart of the leader, and after events prove that no wisdom was here gained by this fatal experience. Of the proposal to poison the sick in the plague-hospital of Jaffa, little need be said at present; the suggestion speaks for itself; and we shall unfortunately see the principle acted upon at a future period.

The Turks having landed an army at Aboukir, in July 1799, Napoleon marched against them, and easily defeated their undisciplined multitudes. This success

enabled him to return to France with the semblance of a conqueror: he deserted his army therefore; abandoned them, as we know from Kleber's letter, in the most deplorable condition; and embarked in secret on board a frigate prepared by Admiral Gauthaume. Escorted by two other vessels of war, he arrived at Frejus on the 9th September, after a passage of forty-one days.

Ancient historians would have described the morning on which he again set foot on the soil of Europe as marked by dark and portentous omens. "The sun," they would have said, "was obscured, thrones and temples were shaken, and hostile fires flamed over mighty cities; armies," they would have told us, "had fought in upper air, the blood of the combatants bedewed the earth and dismayed its trembling inhabitants, whilst millions of gored and mangled spectres, flitting through the lurid light, rendered day hideous, and proclaimed that millions were destined to perish by the insatiable ambition of the man whose return was so fearfully announced to the world." And fatally indeed would the omens have been verified.

But Napoleon landed under different auspices; and he no sooner touched the soil of France, than the boundless acclamations of the people already told that he was the absolute ruler of the land.

During his intimacy with Talleyrand, Count Gagern obtained permission to address some questions to him on the great events of the time; and as three of these relate to the exact period of which we are speaking, we shall here give them, together with the answers, exactly as we find them in the *Second Peace of Paris*.* Talleyrand's reply to the first question shows how unworthy

* Der Zweite Pariser Frieden. von H. C. Freiherrn von Gagern. Leipzig, 1845.

are the attempts made to represent Napoleon's desertion of the Egyptian army as the result of orders sent by the Government.

"*Question.* Who recalled Napoleon from Egypt? *Answer.* No one. The resolution was altogether his own; though it may have been suggested by the check experienced before Acre. He thought he could justify his return by the defeats sustained in Italy during his absence, and which might render his services necessary. The proof is, that he always said, his successors in command of the army of Egypt could have defended the country if they had possessed any ability.

"*Question.* Who occasioned the 18th Brumair? *Answer.* Every body: but it was principally caused by discredit into which the Directory had fallen.

"*Question.* What influence did M. de Talleyrand exercise at the time? *Answer.* He was frequently consulted by Bonaparte, who confided in him, and believed that he entertained monarchical ideas."

The conduct of the Directory had been rapidly tending to effect the process which, in revolutionary times, so readily metamorphoses the truncheon of military command into the sceptre of royal or dictatorial rule. Regardless of the peace concluded at Campo-Formio, urged on by a Republican spirit of aggression, they had invaded Switzerland, seized on the states of the Church, and deprived the Kings of Naples and Sardinia of all their continental possessions. Even their great Eastern expedition proved to be fitted out, not against hostile England, but against unoffending neutrals, against the Turks and the Knights of Malta. Aggressions so unprincipled left the continental states no security for future independence, except what could be established by force of arms; and Russia having joined the coalition,

the war was again renewed in 1799. The Allies were at first eminently successful. The Arch-Duke Charles was victorious in Germany, and the redoubted Suvaroff liberated Italy, with the exception of Genoa, from the yoke of the French. Fortune, however, still clung to the Republican banners: Soult and Massena defeated the Russians in Switzerland; and in Holland, General Brune foiled the British expedition under the Duke of York,—a termination of the campaign that dissolved the most powerful coalition which had yet been formed against revolutionary France.

But these military triumphs, however important at the time, only averted further disaster: they still left Italy, with the exception of Genoa and the Riviera, in the hands of the Austrians; added no new conquests to those formerly achieved, and added little therefore to the rapidly sinking power of the Republican government. The Directory had, in fact, no hold on the affections of any party in France. It was hated, as anti-revolutionary, by the Jacobins and fiery Republicans, whose power had been overthrown on the 9th Thermidor, by the very men now at the head of affairs; and who had so greatly retrograded from the revolutionary conduct and doctrines of the Convention and its frightful committees. The Royalists were naturally hostile to those who occupied the place of the Bourbons; the National Guard and citizens of Paris recollected with no favourable feeling the grape and cannister shot that dispersed them on the day of the Sections; and the mass of the people, who had derived no benefit from the revolution, sighed for change and novelty. The respectable part of the community, which had so gladly rallied round the men who overthrew the sanguinary demagogues of the Reign of Terror, were alienated by the corruption, venal-

ity, and arbitrary conduct of the Directory; and the army, still fiercely democratic in sentiment, felt no attachment to a body universally accused of aristocratic predilections. But the government, though feeble and despised, had for five years been in full and perfect operation, and had effected great improvements, the merit of which has most unjustly been given to Napoleon. On the fall of the Jacobins, society had immediately returned to the decencies, and to many of the elegancies, of civilized life; the laws were obeyed; there was neither anarchy nor revolt; even forced loans brought supplies, and the difficulties resulting from the maximum, and from the frightful depreciation of the revolutionary paper-currency, had to some extent been surmounted. The armies were triumphant; and though Italy was lost, Switzerland had been added to the earlier conquest of the Republic,—the frontiers of which still reached far beyond their original limits. All these circumstances are, however, carefully kept out of sight by the ordinary historians of Napoleon, who represent him as having rescued France from the danger of foreign invasion, as well as from the most frightful state of internal anarchy and confusion.

Projects for the overthrow of the government had already been in agitation when Napoleon reached Paris, and the enthusiasm with which he was received by the people, made the disaffected look to him for support in their undertaking. The military part of the action had originally been intended for the young and gallant Joubert; but his fall at the battle of Novi now left the part open for Napoleon. The Directory, though possessing strong constitutional as well as revolutionary powers, were yet so feeble from internal dissensions and want of confidence, that the intrigue for their overthrow was actually carried

on in open day, and known to nearly all Paris. Barras, the only man of talents and character among the Directors, had been long tired of Republicanism, and was in communication with the Bourbons ; the Abbé Sieyés and his shadow Roger Ducos were parties to the project for overthrowing the government of which they formed part ; the other two were hardly known even by name.

Against such feeble foes victory could hardly be doubtful ; and yet was defeat nearly sustained, owing to the conduct of Napoleon. How completely he failed at the moment of execution is not denied even by his worshippers : he was obliged to leave the Hall of the Ancients in utter confusion, and was carried half-fainting from the Assembly of the Five Hundred by some grenadiers who came to his aid. The blow was supposed to have failed ; Sieyés, Talleyrand, and Arnauld, had already called for their carriages, when Lucien Bonaparte, President of the Council of Five Hundred, refusing to put his brother's outlawry to the vote, left the Hall, placed himself at the head of the troops, and called upon them to disperse the "assembly of brigands," the "representatives of the poignard," as he termed the senate over which he had so lately presided.

The soldiers replied with shouts of "Long live Bonaparte!" but when ordered to advance and clear the Hall, they hesitated. "Is it for the Republic we are to march?" they inquired. Life and death hung suspended on that moment, when Lucien's presence of mind again gave the decisive impulse. Drawing his sword, he declared he would plunge it into his brother's heart if ever he turned against the constitution ; and Murat giving the word "Forward!" the grenadiers followed him, and soon dispersed the tumultuary assembly.

During the whole of this scene, Napoleon trembled like a leaf, and with his head bent down over his horse's neck remained totally incapable of any effort. "Assassins hired by England had," he said, "attempted to murder him;" and while repeating these idle words, his unguided charger was carrying him away from the scene of action towards the bridge of the Seine.*

Victory achieved, the conspirators assembled their friends and passed a decree in the name of the two Councils, announcing the adoption of a Consular Constitution, and nominating Napoleon, Sieyés, and Roger Ducos, consuls, with almost dictatorial power.

The government in the hands of a successful soldier, supported by the favour of the army, soon gathered strength, and acquired the confidence of a great portion of the nation, which, harassed by so many convulsions, were anxious for the establishment of some permanent authority. Popular favour gave the consuls, or the First Consul rather, for the others were cyphers from the very commencement, the most enthusiastic support: and it must be admitted that Napoleon made a skilful use of the advantage; obtained credit for some acts of forbearance, rather than of clemency, very unusual at the period; while the proscriptions that already marked the first days of his absolutism, were overlooked as too much in harmony with the ordinary acts of revolutionary governments to attract attention.

The new Constitution of Sieyés established a council of state, composed of well salaried functionaries named by the government, but exercising no control whatever over any branch of the executive, acting only as a consulting and advising council, projecting, amending, and

* Capefigue, vol. i.

discussing the laws and plans proposed for the benefit of the country, or the honour of the government. This council, which could excite no jealousy, was greatly augmented by Napoleon, who often presided at their deliberations, and made them, while Consul as well as Emperor, one of the main and most beneficial engines of his government.

Military success was soon, however, required to give consistency and lustre to the consulate ; nor was Napoleon slow in seeking for opportunities to acquire it. The victorious termination of the last campaign, the retreat of the English and Russians from the scene of Continental warfare, which left Austria alone in the arena, had rendered large Republican armies disposable. These were now marched to the most important points of action ; all discharged soldiers fit for service were recalled to their standards, and levies of conscripts raised in every department of the warlike Republic. General Moreau led a powerful army into Germany ; another, termed the Army of Reserve, composed, contrary to usual assertion, of tried and warlike troops,* was assembled at Dijon, and led across the Great and Little St Bernard into Italy. At all periods of history military bands have crossed these mountains ; always, except in winter, deemed practicable for travellers ; and although the difficulties of the passage were considerable, they have been vastly exaggerated by historians.

Napoleon himself assumed the command of this army ; but did not, as so many fables assert, accompany the troops in their toilsome march, and encourage them by his presence. He remained tranquilly at Lausanne while the troops were crossing the mountain, and only rejoined them in the valley of Aosta. The circuitous

* Spectateur Militaire, vol. vii.

march followed by the invaders after their descent from the Alps, first to Chiavasso, and then to Milan and Placentia, occasioned the loss of Genoa, so long blockaded by the Austrians. And though the French had 80,800 men in Italy at the opening of the campaign, they fought the decisive battle of Marengo with only 28,160 present in the field; while the Austrians, who commenced operations with 74,141 men, brought 28,496 into action.

Of the battle itself no account can be given here. During the early part of the day events turned completely against the French, who were driven from their first position, and pursued far across the plain. The Consular Guard—hurled forward in the first of its fields, even as the Imperial Guard was in its last, and described as having opposed a rock-like resistance to every attack—suffered a complete overthrow: all who escaped the sword having been captured. Resistance appeared to have ceased, and Napoleon is described as riding about, "with depressed looks, extremely agitated, braving danger better than disaster, attempting nothing, and expecting every thing from fortune."

It was past five o'clock when the arrival of General Desaix at St Juliano arrested the pursuit, and when a charge of cavalry, executed by General Kellerman, overthrew not only the leading division of the Austrians, but drove back the whole centre of their army in shameful flight to the very bridge-head of the Bormida. General Melas, a veteran seventy-six years of age, having been slightly wounded during the early part of the action, and more seriously hurt by the fall of two horses shot under him, had been carried to the rear; the two officers next in seniority had also been wounded: the consequence was, that at the most important moment of the battle, the army found itself without a commander.

The corps to the right and left, under Ott and O'Reilly, that still continued their unopposed advance, and might easily, by closing in, have dispersed the French who were following the chase as wildly as the vanquished were flying, seeing the fire retrograde so rapidly towards the Bormida, and receiving no orders, fell back in the same direction, but made no effort to retrieve the battle, which terminated between nine and ten o'clock in the complete victory of the Republicans.

The battle of Marengo certainly placed the crown on the head of Napoleon ; though, if we believe a widely circulated and generally accredited anecdote, the victor was not, on this occasion, so great as his victory. He had not ordered the brilliant onset which decided the day ; General Kellerman saw and seized the opportunity for striking the blow, and the chieftain deigned, it seems, to be a little jealous of the fame the subordinate had acquired. When the real victor entered the room in which Napoleon with his staff and a number of Generals was at supper after the battle, the Consul only said, "Ah! Kellerman, you made a pretty good charge there ;" to which the offended officer replied, "Yes, Citizen Consul, I have placed the crown on your head ;" an answer that caused Kellerman to be ever afterwards kept in the back-ground.

Shortly before the action, General Melas had written to Lord Keith, stating, that in case of reverse he should throw himself into Genoa ; but he now abandoned a resolution which promised to be attended with the best advantages, and entered into negotiations with the conqueror. By the convention of Alexandria which followed, the Austrians resigned all Piedmont and Lombardy, as far as the Mincio, for the sole benefit of being allowed to withdraw their army without obstacle ; and

thus set the first example of the many fatal conventions which in after years tended so greatly to facilitate the progress of the French; by inducing commanders to resign a cause on the first frowns of fortune, before the best efforts of arms had been tried, and merely on the craven belief, "that it was in vain to contend against Napoleon."

The passage of the Alps, and the recovery of Italy, by a single battle, excited universal astonishment in Europe, and the boundless admiration of all, whether in or out of France, who were favourable to the new Consul or Republican cause. Considered in a political point of view, as an enterprise conducted in a manner best calculated, if successful, to dazzle the many, and captivate the imagination of the Parisians, it certainly deserves the highest praise: strategically examined as a military operation, it can deserve little or none. The marches and counter-marches, from the foot of the St Bernard to Chiavasso, and from thence to Milan, occasioned the loss of Genoa: having superior forces in Italy, the French commander fought his decisive battle with inferior numbers, and was indebted to fortune rather than to skill for his victory. He was besides so situated, with his communication cut off, and in the midst of hostile fortresses, that defeat would have proved more disastrous to him than it did to his adversary, had the fortunes of the field turned against him.

The pretended echelon movement, *mouvement de conversion*, as Berthier and Napoleon term it, by which the battle is said to have been gained, the throwing back of the left wing while the right maintained the village of Castel-Ceriolo as a pivot, are mere puerilities fit only to deceive the ignorant, and to furnish the observant with some standard by which to estimate the judgment

of the men who devised them. Castel-Ceriolo was besides in possession of the Austrians during the whole of the actual battle. The progressive accumulation of false statements successively ordered by Napoleon himself, which disfigure Berthier's *Relation de la Bataille de Marengo*, are fully exposed in the *Memorial du Depot de la Guerre* for 1828. The volume lays bare the grossest historical forgery ever perhaps practised on the world.

Many writers, carried away by their zeal in favour of the French Emperor, have compared his march across the Alps to Hannibal's celebrated passage over the same mountains; not perceiving the small dimensions to which the ill-judged comparison necessarily reduce the modern enterprise. From Dijon to the foot of the Alps, the French army had only to perform a short and easy march through subject countries, and over good and travelled roads. The march of General Moncey's corps, which passed the St Gothard, was equally secure, and still shorter: General Bethencourt's division started from Lion, at the very foot of the mountains, where it had been quartered. Hannibal, on the contrary, had to perform a march of 800 miles, through the territories of strangers and barbarians; and was often forced to fight his way against hostile tribes and nations.

Napoleon was head of the government as well as of the army, and was able to command all the resources that France could furnish; his troops were natives of the same land; they knew the country they were about to invade, and were confident of victory against enemies they had so often vanquished in battle. Hannibal had little assistance to expect from Carthage, where the Hanno faction thwarted all his efforts; and the sword was obliged to furnish him with resources. The Carthaginian soldiers were children of different lands; they

differed in language, manners, habits, and modes of fighting; and their wild and varied aspect presented a living picture of the many races and climates included within the limits of the ancient world. It was only by the genius of their leader that such a host could be rendered efficient, as it was the confidence only which they reposed in his wisdom and valour, that could inspire them with courage to encounter foes by whom they and their fathers had been so often defeated, and from whom the very state they served had been forced to purchase a humiliating peace.

The French army set out upon their expedition, animated with the hope of conquests and an early peace, and cheered by the news of the first victories which the armies of the Rhine had achieved. Hannibal's army could only anticipate a series of sanguinary combats after their arrival in Italy: the dreaded passage of the Alps was to them but the first step in the career of danger. Though Hannibal may not perhaps have crossed the St Bernard, many armies had done so, both in ancient and modern times:* the path, if difficult, was not therefore unknown or untrodden; and Napoleon could hold out to his soldiers the example of the Carthaginians. Hannibal had no predecessor, and was obliged to discover, and often to construct the very roads necessary for the passage of his army. The greatest difficulty the French had to contend with was occasioned by the transport of artil-

* In the year 69, the army of Cæcina having defeated the Helvetii at Vindomissa, returned into Italy by the St Bernard. An army of Longobards performed a similar march in 574. When Charlemagne undertook his expedition against the Longobards, a division of his army, commanded by his uncle Bernhard, crossed the St Bernard. In the tenth century several Burgundian, Italian, and Saracen armies, passed the same mountain, as did Berthold IV. Duke of Thuringia, in 1160.

lery; but they were aided by the exertions of the peasantry hired from all the neighbouring districts. Many of Hannibal's soldiers had never seen snow or ice; his elephants, totally unused to travel in frosty regions, must have occasioned him more trouble than the French experienced from the transport of their guns; and instead of being aided by friendly monks, and by an active and well-paid peasantry, he had all the savage hordes of the mountain wilderness to contend with. Napoleon had maps, plans, and topographical surveys to guide him; he had able engineers, and all the advantages of modern science and machinery to furnish assistance. Hannibal had to collect his information from ignorant or treacherous barbarians, as often willing to lead the strangers to their ruin, as to assist them in their progress; and it was only to the genius of their leader, that the extraordinary host he commanded could look for the means of overcoming the various obstacles constantly springing up in their path.

Of all the military expeditions recorded in history, there is none, perhaps, that for grandeur of conception, daring, skilful, and long-continued perseverance, can be compared to the gigantic enterprise of Hannibal. The expedition of Alexander may be more romantic, and surrounded by more barbaric splendour; but when we consider that the one had Persians, and the other Romans, to contend against, then must the son of Ammon, great as he was, yield the palm to the man who for fifteen years carried on a war in Italy, aided by no resources except those he derived from his genius, courage, and lofty patriotism.

The winter campaign in Bavaria followed on the campaign of Marengo; and General Moreau having gained the decisive battle of Hohenlinden, obliged the

Austrians, weakened by so many years of defeat, to sue for terms, and sign the treaty of Luneville, highly advantageous to France. But popular as this brilliant success rendered the Consul with the bulk of the people, it did not immediately check the murderous designs of hostile factions, familiarized to crime by the long course of the Revolution. Some obscure Jacobins entered into a conspiracy, the details of which are lost in the confused statements of the French police, to assassinate him at the theatre: betrayed and arrested, they were punished with death. Four royalist conspirators acted a more decided part, and fixed upon the 24th December for the execution of the foulest attempts at murder recorded since the well-known gunpowder-plot was projected in our own country.

As it was known that the First Consul intended to visit the opera, two of the conspirators, Carbon and Saint Regent, placed an explosive machine, justly termed an infernal one, in the *Rue Saint Nicaisse* through which he had to pass. The machine had the appearance of a water-carrier's cart, and attracted no suspicion. When Napoleon's carriage approached, Saint Regent fired the train: the explosion was tremendous, twenty-two persons were killed and fifty-six wounded, and many of the surrounding houses seriously damaged. Napoleon's escape was almost miraculous: his coachman was driving very fast, so that he had passed the fatal machine by about a second before it exploded. The Consul proceeded directly to the opera and took his seat; but he was not calm and composed as it is usual to assert; on the contrary, he was agitated and looked around, as Capefigue tells us, with an anxious and inquiring glance. He was, however, received with the most enthusiastic cheers of the audience, who, naturally shocked by an attempt

so dark and criminal, expressed the most unfeigned joy at the escape of one, whose wonderful elevation even Providence seemed to legitimize by the marked protection vouchsafed him.

All Napoleon's biographers have, of course, praised the calmness and self-possession which, as they say, he displayed on this occasion; though they seem, as usual, to be rather premature with their panegyrics. Josephine's carriage was following that of the Consul; but owing to some accident she did not leave the Tuileries till a few seconds after her husband, and as the leading coachman drove very fast, she had not overtaken him when the machine was fired; so that by extreme good fortune, the explosion took place between the two carriages, and only shattered the windows of the second, slightly wounding Hortense Beauharnais in the arm. Napoleon knew that his wife and daughter-in-law were close behind him; he knew that the street was full of people, but instead of halting to ascertain the fate of those who, it is pretended, were so dear to him, and certainly deserved to be so, instead of halting to aid the sufferers, to arrest by his presence and authority the further mischief that might have been in progress, he ordered his coachman to drive on, and arrived safely at the opera. His flight on this occasion,—the flight of the husband, father, and chief magistrate,—from so dreadful a scene of death and ruin, is more disgraceful, evinces a more callous heart, a greater want of lofty firmness and character, than the flight of the commander who deserted so many gallant and ruined armies in the hour of adversity.

But though he evinced little presence of mind in the moment of danger, he did not fail to profit by the criminal attempt itself, in order to enlarge the bounds of his power. The Jacobin party were naturally suspected of

being the originators of the plot; and an edict was easily passed, condemning without trial a hundred and thirty of the most notorious *terrorists* to perpetual banishment. Seventy-eight were transported to Cayenne, the others were long dragged from prison to prison in France, and treated with great severity; so that it is not easy to see on what authority English biographers assert that Napoleon, scorning the remains of this now powerless party, cancelled their sentence; the fact is, that he was weak enough to dread the Jacobins, even to the last day of his reign.

Nor did his efforts stop here; and Thiebaudeau gives us the details of the long debates that took place in the Council of State, on his repeated and strongly-urged proposal to pass a decree for the immediate execution, without any trial, of fifteen or twenty individuals of the Jacobin party,—a party to which he had himself belonged, and which, however criminal its conduct had often been, was innocent at least on this occasion.

Better measures were not however wanting at this time; and the recall of the emigrants, and the restoration of Christian worship, though acts that almost forced themselves upon firmly-established authority, reflect just credit on the consular government,—a credit greatly enhanced, indeed, by the opposition both measures were certain to experience: for atheism and republican selfishness were still deeply rooted in France. Owing to the Consul's indifference, or to the power of the latter feeling, the decree for restoring the unsold property of the emigrants was very imperfectly executed; and the words of General Delmas, when high mass was for the first time celebrated with pomp in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, show too clearly the sentiments entertained on religious subjects. "What thought you of the ceremony?" said

Napoleon to the Republican soldier, as they left the church together : " Oh, the mummery,"—*Capucinade*—replied the other, " was well enough ; and only wanted the presence of the couple of million of Frenchmen who got themselves killed to abolish what you are restoring !"

The mental infirmities of the Emperor Paul of Russia are well known : from being the enemy of France, he became the admirer of the Consul, and the deadly foe of all his adversaries. And Napoleon, fortified by this new alliance, gave full scope to his grasping and aggressive disposition. Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Germany, were oppressed ; and the power of France, far as it extended, every where employed for the purpose of mean extortion. The German Empire was remodelled ; the ecclesiastical and minor States secularized for the benefit of the stronger powers ; the most shameful barter was openly carried on with lands and provinces ; bribery and corruption were at their height ; and the wishes, interests, and happiness of the people entirely disregarded. It is from the period of these ignoble transactions that the vast fortunes of Talleyrand, of Napoleon's brothers, and other high personages of the Consular Court, must be dated ; and it is only by reading *Von Gagern's* account of his negotiations at Paris that any conception of the unworthy conduct of these unworthy men can be formed. French writers often tell us that Germany was greatly benefited by these secularizations ; and in some respects this may be true ; but little thanks are due to them nevertheless : the shot, the shells, the hostile fires, that destroy an old town, are not usually acknowledged with gratitude, merely because a new city may be raised upon ruins they have occasioned.

British armaments had recaptured Malta, and expelled the French from Egypt ; a fleet sent to the Baltic had

gained the battle of Copenhagen, and dissolved the Northern Alliance. These were severe blows to the Consul, who, unable to avenge them by arms, strove to avenge them by libels. The death of his most zealous ally, the Emperor of Russia, who, at the moment of which we are speaking, had fallen a victim to one of those palace revolutions unfortunately too common in Muscovite history, was thus announced in the Moniteur:— "The Emperor Paul," said this official organ of slander, "died in the night of the 23d to the 24th March. The English squadron passed the Sound on the 30th of the same month; and history will inform us what connection exists between these events." We quote this wretched libel as illustrative of the character of its author, and not with any view of exposing a calumny which even Schlösser, fiercely hostile as he is to England, treats with utter contempt.

The details of this tragedy belong not to our subject: but the levity with which a Russian nobleman of high rank treated the ruthless deed, deserves to be recorded, as it may help to throw some light on the feelings of Russian society at the period. Count Münster arriving at Petersburg shortly after the Emperor's assassination, received an account of the atrocious proceeding from a Russian magnate of high station. The Hanoverian diplomatist naturally expressed his utter abhorrence of the conduct of the conspirators; to which the Russian replied with the greatest coolness, "But what would you have? it is only our magna-charta: tyranny tempered by murder."

The British government, always sincerely desirous of terminating the war in an honourable manner, readily availed itself of the opening presented by the victories gained in Egypt and the Baltic; and believing that a

durable compact of amity could be formed with the new ruler of France, or wishing at least to give the experiment a fair and honest trial, entered into negotiations which ended in the treaty of Amiens. This treaty, which was far more advantageous to France than to England, placed Napoleon in the proudest position it was ever his destiny to fill.

CHAPTER III.

NAPOLEON EMPEROR OF FRANCE AND KING OF ITALY.

The height of power had been attained; the Consul held absolute sway over the mightiest empire of Continental Europe; and never, during the many centuries through which the records of history extend, had fortune placed an individual in a position so lofty and enviable, and so wonderfully calculated to augment, by generous efforts, the ordinary sum of human happiness. Providence seemed almost willing to show how much could be done for man, without eliciting from a hardened heart even one spark of that gratitude which is displayed by deeds of virtue and generosity. France, bleeding from the contests of internal factions; Europe harassed and exhausted by war; neutral States oppressed, robbed and insulted, sighed for continued peace after the long and destructive contest, the source of so much suffering.

The sword was sheathed; and the political world seemed to revive from years of distress, as nature revives under the genial influence of the summer sun, when the desolating tempests of winter have passed away: long estranged nations again greeted each other in amity, unimbittered by the deep hatred which the sanguinary events of after years engendered. Relieved from the toil, pressure, and dangers of war, good-will

to all was for a moment at least the universal feeling that pervaded the great Christian community: it seemed as if the reign of Astræa might again have been recalled to earth, had the ruler of France been willing to assist in restoring her empire.

A new era fraught with new, and therefore dangerous, ideas perhaps,—fraught with new opinions, institutions, and manners,—was opening on the world; and it required a strong power in the centre of Europe to check the extravagance, and give the fiery elements, called so suddenly into action, a wise and beneficial direction. Napoleon's military sceptre could have formed that power; wholesome improvement could have expanded beneath his sway; and neighbouring princes, strong in his alliance, depending on his honour and justice, relieved from the dread of seeing wild anarchy supplant amelioration, and blood-stained tyranny arise at the call made for liberal institutions, might have bestowed upon their subjects all the benefits of the enlarged views of policy and government then in progress.

Never, indeed, was a career so great and noble opened to the occupant of earthly throne, as was opened to Napoleon Bonaparte when firmly established in his curule chair. He might have closed the temple of Janus to the whole of that generation which, under his reign, was never to see peace restored; he might have encouraged trade, and a friendly intercourse between nations, and obtained for France and her dependencies the "ships, colonies, and commerce," which he coveted; he might have secured for her the splendid benefits which peace and good government were certain to confer on a country of such vast influence and capabilities. It rested with him to become the benefactor, not only of the country over which he ruled, but of the neighbour-

ing states and nations that followed in its mighty orbit; and to merit by such conduct the blessings of contemporary millions, and the admiration of succeeding ages. A man of genius, or great talent, would have seen the glorious career thus open before him, and would have followed it with proportionate ardour. Endowed with inferior intellect, a man of noble spirit and lofty sentiments, would have felt the duties of the high position impressed upon his very heart in characters of flame; such a man would have taken bright honour for his guide, achieved the lofty task traced out before him; or had he failed, would have failed in virtue's path, and "died as honour dies."

Let us now see how Napoleon fulfilled the duties of his station.

The ink was hardly dry with which the treaty of Amiens had been signed, before a new career of unjust aggression was commenced. Holland and Italy remained in the hands of the French; Switzerland was invaded and reduced to a real, if not a nominal province of France; and by a simple decree of the French Senate, the kingdom of Piedmont and the Duchy of Piombino were added to the mighty Republic. And when England remonstrated against such acts of arbitrary usurpation, the answer was, that "they were mere trifles, for which the government ought to have been prepared."

Conduct so domineering rendered measures of precaution necessary; and the British refused to evacuate Malta till satisfaction for the past, and security against future aggressions should be obtained. But, overbearing in his "pride of place," the Consul threatened instead of negotiating. Maddened by the attack of the English press, he demanded the suppression of its freedom; insulted the British ambassador at a public levee, and the

country itself by various acts of vindictive arrogance ; as well as in numberless publications, especially in the low, swaggering, and insolent report of Colonel Sebastiani.

The result is soon told : war was proclaimed, and the wildest and most sanguinary contest that ever shook the world's surface commenced. Combats were fought on the land and on the ocean ; "the great globe itself" was one wide battle-field ; and for twelve years the sun never set on the vast scene of strife. Gloom and despondency gathered on the earth ; even the good and the brave began to despair of its freedom ; and Europe was more than once strewn with the wrecks of broken thrones and scattered armies. A blood-red cloud settled over its ravaged fields, and was not dispersed till the efforts of banded and long insulted nations had shivered the throne of power, so long occupied by the man who chose to be the world's oppressor when he might have been its benefactor.

It is very evident, we think, that the Consul's arrogant disposition, and total ignorance of the character of the British people and government, made him rush even unwillingly into this new war. His usual want of clear and distinct ideas prevented him from perceiving the plainly-marked limits—marked almost by the ocean itself —of his vast and extensive power. His haughty demands were made in the belief that he could brow-beat his adversaries, and command submission ; and however willing to retract when he found himself deceived, was here, as we shall find on other occasions, too much under the influence of false pride to yield while time was left him.

No sooner was he informed of the British declaration of war, than he resorted to a measure which proved that the contest was to be carried on in a manner never

before practised among civilized nations. His first step was to issue an order for the arrest of all the English between eighteen and sixty, who were travelling in France. This gross breach of honour and hospitality occasioned great suffering and distress to many respectable families : it ruined the hopes and prospects of many individuals totally unconnected with the profession of arms. But it could impair the strength and resources of England as little as it could benefit the cause of France ; and was, therefore, a mere act of useless oppression, resulting far more from the vindictive malice of a little spirit that meets with unexpected resistance, than from any fair views of national warfare.

Having no means of directly attacking Britain—the very power he had called to the field—the Consul made the defenceless feel the full extent of his might. The neutrality of Germany was violated, and the Electorate of Hanover occupied and most shamefully oppressed ; French troops took possession of the kingdom of Naples, which fared little better ; the people of Holland were taxed to maintain a contest carried on against their best interest ; and Spain was robbed of her treasures to prepare armaments for the attack of a country with which the Spanish government was on terms of peace and amity.

The adherents of the exiled princes, fancying that the renewal of the war with England offered them an opportunity to effect the restoration of the Bourbons, entered at this time into some ill-concerted projects for the overthrow of the Consular government. How much they were deceived, betrayed into their injudicious conspiracy by the agents of the French police, is known from the official publication of the Consular government, founded on the declaration of its own agent, Mehée de la Touche.

This man, a low Jacobin, who with others had been unjustly imprisoned and transported to the Isle of Oleron, after the affair of the infernal machine, had, on his release, entered into the service of the French police, a service congenial to the sect of which he was a member. He was sent to Jersey, Guernsey, and England, for the purpose of deceiving the emigrants and the Bourbon Princes with the hopes of effecting a counter-revolution; and succeeded so far as to obtain considerable sums of money from them, while corresponding with Talleyrand and the police. From London he went to Germany, and entered into communications with Mr Drake, the English Ambassador at the Court of Munich, as well as with Mr Spencer Smith, who filled the same situation at the Court of Würtemberg. Under the pretence that funds only were wanting to bring about a rising against the Consular government, he obtained money from both these diplomatists, who were evidently weak men, easily imposed upon. Mr Taylor, the English minister at Cassel, was also concerned in these wretched intrigues. When the French authorities had thus collected a sufficient number of documents to make out what might appear a case against England, they published them to the world; mutilated and misrepresented of course, so as best to suit their own views. And the chief judge, Regnier, who was still at the head of the police, had actually the effrontery to bring forward, as an official document, the report of Mehée de la Touche, who, by his own declaration, signed himself liar, spy, and vagabond: a witness fully worthy of the cause he was employed to support.

It will be needless to tell the reader, that no British minister could ever, directly or indirectly, so far disgrace himself and his country, as to project or encourage the assassination of the First Consul. There has never,

in modern times, been a single individual, holding any ostensible situation under the government of these Islands, who would not have shrunk with horror from such a proposal, and with loathing from any person who could make it. But though it is very certain, that no conspiracy against the Consul's life was ever sanctioned by the government, ever allowed to be formed with its knowledge, it is very possible that exertions were made to support the cause of the expelled dynasty. Such measures, if not of a very dignified character, are fully justified by belligerent rights. The Bourbon governments of France and Spain had frequently, when at war with England, instigated the partisans of the House of Stewart to take arms in favour of the exiled family; but they had never, on that account, been accused of treachery, or of instigating the assassination of English princes. Napoleon himself had resorted to such modes of warfare, and boasted on one occasion—falsely we suspect—of being in communication with disaffected parties in Ireland; nor were these efforts to weaken open enemies, whether real or pretended, ever deemed treacherous; still less were they supposed to be connected with plots formed against the lives of English or Austrian princes. But no sooner were such measures directed against himself, no sooner was his own power threatened, than he assailed the British government with torrents of the foulest slander that ever recoiled in disgrace upon its author. All these miserable proceedings would not now deserve a single word of notice, had not several French and German writers—some even who have attained a certain station in literature, repeated the mean and contemptible calumnies—attempted to falsify history in favour of Napoleon, and to uphold his character by blackening the fair fame of the nation that struck him down.

Misled by treacherous agents and injudicious friends, —induced to believe that a strong royalist party existed in France—George Cadoudal, the redoubted Chouan leader, General Pichegru, the conqueror of Holland, and several other royalists of note, came secretly to Paris, where they expected to assemble a force capable of openly attacking the Consul in the midst of his guards. They also expected the aid of Moreau, with whom Pichegru had several interviews ; but this officer, though hostile to Napoleon, was not disposed to aid the Bourbons ; and the conspirators, deceived in all their anticipations, having never contemplated the assassination of the Consul, were only seeking for means to leave Paris, when they were betrayed and arrested,

We are informed by Desmarets* that Napoleon actually started out of bed and made the sign of the cross, when informed, at seven o'clock in the morning, that his rival, Moreau, was in communication with the principal conspirators. If so, the Consul was more fortunate than Lord Byron's renegade, of whom the poet says,

> "His trembling hand refused to sign
> The cross he deemed no more divine ;
> He had resumed it in that hour,
> But conscience wrung away the power."

Napoleon's conscience was more subservient to his will.

It appears from Desmarets, Rovigo, and others, that the Consul took an active part in directing the proceedings of the police at this moment ; and that he evinced, if we believe these unfortunate panegyrists, a singular degree of sagacity in selecting for execution the persons

* Témoignages Historiques ; ou Quinze ans de Haute Police sous Napoleon. Paris, 1833.

most likely to be intimidated, and to give the best information. The German historian Schlösser, in remarking on the circumstance, says, "that it is afflicting to find a great man thus occupied;" forgetting, in his admiration of the French ruler, that no great man ever was or could be thus occupied; and that a *sbiro* at the head of empire would form the most repulsive sight men could behold. It is impossible, indeed, to represent Napoleon in a more unfavourable light than his worshippers have done, in relating the events of these conspiracies. Believing that they are describing the conduct of a hero and a sage, they yet make him act and speak with a degree of vulgar and blood-thirsty violence, which shows too clearly that the pictures are drawn from life; though, fortunately for the cause of truth, by those who do not perceive the full value of the truth which they reveal.

Moreau acted a feeble part on his arrest, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, which the Consul commuted into banishment from France. Pichegru, who acted a bold and decided part on his first examination, was found dead in his bed on the morning of the 7th of April, having, it was said, committed suicide; though the manner of his death gave rise to the very general belief of his having been secretly murdered. George, and the other conspirators, having been convicted, were sentenced to death, and the greater number executed in consequence.

While the trial of the accused was pending, another tragedy was prepared and acted with a degree of celerity and system that marked the cool, resolute, and practised hands of its authors. The Duke of Enghien, residing at Oppenheim, in the neutral territory of Baden, was seized in the night of 11th March by a party of French troops who had crossed the Rhine. After a few days'

confinement in the citadel of Strasbourg, he was conveyed, post haste, to Paris, brought immediately before a military commission, and shot in the moat of Vincennes on the very night of his arrival.

Not a shadow of evidence has ever been brought forward to show that this unfortunate prince was connected with the conspiracy. The very spot where he was seized, weeks after the arrest of the conspirators had been announced in all the journals, is sufficient proof of his innocence: for no sane man remains within reach of the tiger's fangs after having aroused his fury.

Though Napoleon's admirers have only attempted to palliate, and never to defend, this ruthless murder, it is still allowed to stand in the life of its author, as an isolated action from which no inferences affecting his fair fame and character are to be drawn. In ordinary cases, assassination, slowly premeditated and systematically executed, could only be atoned for by a life of virtue, sorrow, and repentance. Moved by the agonized efforts of a conscious criminal, striving through suffering years to purify his heart from the blackness of committed sin, the world would forgive where even heaven has promised pardon. But Napoleon added crime to crime, and led a life of pride, arrogance, and falsehood: he repented not; and we have a right, by every principle of honour that ever reigned on earth, by every law human and divine, to demand the same verdict against him that would be given against any other offender guilty of a similar conduct,—to demand that, instead of being proclaimed by fanatical parties as the champion of justice, wisdom, and enlightened liberality, he should be branded by the voice of indignant mankind as a blood-thirsty slave and stabber.

Nor were these the only victims of the Consul's policy.

The peace of Amiens had offered him a fair opportunity for restoring the authority of France over the colony of St Domingo, which yielded little more than nominal allegiance to the Republic. A formidable armament was, in consequence, sent to the West Indies; and the Blacks, foiled in some trifling efforts to resist, submitted to the invader. But here also treachery marked the course of Napoleon's myrmidons, and led to their ruin. Toussaint L'Ouverture, the Negro leader, was seized contrary to the faith of treaties, and sent to France, where he died soon after his arrival. It is generally said and believed, that his death was occasioned by the sufferings he underwent, having been tortured to make him reveal the place where his treasures were concealed. The actual commission of this crime has never been proved against Napoleon; but there is unfortunately nothing in his character to clear him from the charge; especially, as it exactly resembles the deeds committed in Egypt by his avowed orders. How soon treachery met its just reward is well known. The Blacks, believing themselves destined to destruction, flew to arms, attacked the weakened French, and expelled them the island. But the loss of a splendid colony did not retard the rise of Napoleon.

The explosion of the infernal machine had augmented his power, and made him Consul for life; and the dread of fresh convulsions, excited by the conspiracy of George, now placed the imperial crown upon his head, and made him absolute ruler of France and Italy. The war with England was in full progress; Spain, which paid annually a secret subsidy of three and a half millions sterling to France, for permission to maintain a feigned neutrality, was forced openly into the contest; and French and Spanish ships were falling rapidly into the hands

of the British. In the Western hemisphere, the *tricolor* had ceased to float over many of the French colonies, while not a blow had been struck on the part of France: loud threats of invasion were the only weapons Napoleon had yet been able to wield in the contest.

Accompanied by his consort, the Emperor at this time visited the camp of Boulogne, and the various stations at which preparations were making for the grand enterprise. Whether he really contemplated a descent upon the British shores, is a question never likely to be solved; but the threat certainly called forth a noble and patriotic spirit in England, such as no nation had ever before displayed. Besides the army and militia, 500,000 volunteers, composed of persons of all ranks and parties, assumed arms for the defence of the country. These forces obtained a considerable degree of efficiency, most of the regiments presented a splendid and martial appearance; and though many were disposed to doubt their ability to contend against the tried soldiers of France, it should be recollected, that the Prussian Landwehrs, who in 1813 liberated Germany from oppression, could hardly boast the training of the British volunteers.

From the coast, the Emperor proceeded through the Belgian provinces to Aix-la-Chapelle. He was every where received with the acclamations usually bestowed upon powerful and absolute princes; but the addresses presented to him in his progress were distinguished by an excess of adulation so gross and blasphemous, that it is impossible to decide whether they reflect more disgrace on those who prepared, or on him who tamely received them. At Arras, the prefect in his speech said, that "God made Napoleon, and then rested from his labours."

Proceeding to Mayence, he received a number of the minor Princes of Germany; and it was here that Count Dalberg, chancellor of the German Empire, first suggested the idea of taking up Richelieu's project of a German Confederation, under the protection of France. It was from here, also, that the first invitation was sent to the Pope to cross the Alps, and attend the coronation of the modern Charlemagne; an invitation which the Pontiff accepted, in hopes of obtaining some concessions favourable to the Church. But though Pius VII. acted his part with meek dignity in the gorgeous pageant which took place on the 2d of December 1804, he gained nothing in return beyond the respect of all who had the good fortune to approach him.

The coronation of Napoleon had been very splendid; but it was the "crowning mercy" of Austerlitz which, on the first anniversary of the day, fixed the diadem for so long and fatal a period on his brow.

The treaties which stipulated the independence of Holland and the kingdom of Italy had been disregarded, and the French Emperor continued to rule those countries as parts of his own dominions; the neutrality of Germany had been violated whenever it suited French troops to cross the frontier; and by a mere decree of the French Senate, the Ligurian Republic, Genoa and its territory, was now added to the Grand Empire. Such unexampled conduct, added to the tone of haughty superiority assumed by France on every occasion, rendered it evident, that arms alone could furnish security against continued aggression. This conviction, together with Mr Pitt's return to power in England, which, though it brought no military talents to the direction of affairs, gave the continental states confidence in the firmness of the British Cabinet, induced Sweden,

Russia, and Austria, to join in a new coalition for the avowed purpose of setting bounds to the encroachments of an Empire as dangerous to its neighbours as the previous Republic had been.

The Allies expected the aid of Prussia, and made great promises, and considerable preparations also: but Russia was distant, and the English government, totally unacquainted with the conduct of warlike operations, was tardy; while Austria, standing alone in front rank, was rash and hasty, and sent its best army forward long before it could possibly be supported. The French, on the other hand, were perfectly prepared; their troops were assembled in camps of exercise along the coast of the Channel, and took the field on the first signal.

The catastrophe of Ulm formed the opening scene of the war. The Austrian army was under the orders of General Mack. This unfortunate officer, whose name has become a term of reproach, was looked upon as a good war-minister, but known to be totally unfit for command; and Gentz and Müller, the two ablest men in Germany, both prophesied, as their letters testify, that defeat would be the certain consequence of his being placed at the head of the army; a prophecy too fatally justified by the result.*

Aided by the treachery of the Court of Munich, Napoleon led 190,000 men towards the banks of the Danube. Disregarding neutral rights, living at free quarters, the troops moved rapidly through the fertile provinces of Germany, and while General Mack stood motionless at Ulm, gathered in vastly superior numbers on his very line of communication. Several of the French corps might have been attacked in detail; but the Austrian commander seemed paralyzed; allowed his own detached parties to be separately destroyed; and

* Briefe von Johann von Müller Schaffhausen. 1839.

when pressed back into Ulm, capitulated at the head of 24,000 men, without striking a single blow for honour and for safety.

None of the strategical movements, so loudly boasted of by the admirers of Napoleon, can ever explain the cause of the dreadful catastrophe that here befell the Austrian army; it stands unequalled in history, and shows us a great military operation carried on without a single spark of warlike spirit; a surrender without necessity, and a casting away of all the objects of combat without even an appeal to arms. This terrible disaster prostrated an ancient and time-honoured monarchy at the feet of a revolutionary adventurer; drove the scattered remnants of its armies far back into the remotest provinces of the empire; and reduced the native soldiers of the land to fight as feeble auxiliaries in the ranks of foreign troops, who from the far regions of the north came to their assistance. We laugh to scorn the extravagant adulation that ascribes such results to the skilful combinations of the victor: the brave may be struck down in close combat; but their arms can never be paralyzed by distant strategical movements, that still leave them, as they left them here, the free choice of a hundred fair and open battle-fields.

The catastrophe of Ulm can only be ascribed to the unhappy and spirit-crushing idea then so prevalent, "that it was in vain to resist Napoleon, and that all efforts to oppose the man of destiny were hopeless." This fatal idea, which too often preceded his victories, deprived his adversaries of all composure and self-possession, and made many believe they were acting wise and moderate parts, when setting the dictates of honour and patriotism aside, they yielded to the influence of a miserable delusion, engendered by feebleness, and circulated

by fear, treachery, and selfishness. A similar idea, or despondency rather, preceded, in the ancient world, the march of the Roman legions, and often made kings and nations despair in their strength, their fortune, and their gods, and fall prostrate to earth as lifeless bodies, on the first advance of arrogant and overbearing foes. But in modern times nothing of this kind had yet been witnessed: for the convention of Alexandria was a deed of heroism when compared to the surrender of Ulm; Melas saved at least the army intrusted to his care, whereas Mack saved only the knapsacks and portmanteaus.

It was long the fashion to assert, that Mack had been bribed, and that French gold and not arms had effected his overthrow. The assertion is totally destitute of foundation. Having been cashiered by the sentence of a court-martial, the unfortunate general was reduced to great penury, and only supported his latter days on a small pension allowed him by the Emperor Francis.

The first barrier of opposition thus overthrown, the storm of war rolled rapidly on towards the centre of the Austrian dominions. Vienna, unprepared for defence, surrendered on the first summons; and the French having, by a pretended armistice, deceived Prince Auersberg and the Austrian officer charged to destroy the bridge over the Danube, effected the passage of the river, and established themselves on the left bank of the stream. The advancing Russians, gradually joined by about 20,000 Austrians, fell back into Moravia, and took up an unassailable position in front of Olmütz. Here they were gathering strength; and as the Arch-Duke Charles was already marching on Vienna with an unbroken army of 80,000 men, the chances of success were turning in their favour, when the resolution of sallying forth and attacking the French was unfortunately

adopted. General Kutusoff, the commander-in-chief of the army, and Prince Schwarzenberg, both remonstrated against the fatal measure; but as the Allied Emperors were present with their troops, the authority of generals and marshals was reduced to very narrow and uncertain limits. The want of supplies was also urged as a cause for this ill-judged advance.

The battle of Austerlitz, which terminated the continental war of 1805, was fought on the 2d of December, and ended in the total defeat of the Allies. It would be as impossible here to give any description of the action, as to expose the many extravagancies with which historians have embellished its details; though one fable is too gross perhaps to be left altogether unnoticed. Many thousand Russians, a whole division it is said, perished in the Lake of Aujetz—the fire of the French artillery having broken the ice over which they were endeavouring to effect their escape. Nothing bearing the slightest resemblance to such a catastrophe happened either during or after the battle; and when, in summer, the water of the lake was purposely drawn off, and search made, a very few bodies only were discovered.

The action ceased at three o'clock in the afternoon; the Allies falling back to the position which they had left in the morning, and resuming their unmolested retreat towards Göring some hours afterwards. A single look at the map and the relative situation of the parties, shows the falsehood of the many assertions that represent the retreat of the allied armies as entirely cut off, and the escape of the Emperor Alexander made to depend on the generosity of the conqueror. The defeat, however, was decisive, and completely broke the resolution of the Emperor Francis: he solicited an armistice,

held an interview with the victor, and withdrew from the alliance at the very moment when the best chances of success were in favour of the allied cause. Prussian troops were already in motion to intercept the weakened French; and the Arch-Duke Charles had arrived within a few marches of Vienna, "when the fatal armistice," as the Arch-Duke John writes to Müller, "crushed the hopes of 80,000 men, all eager to avenge their country's wrongs."

The battle of Austerlitz, and the more fatal truce which followed, placed in Napoleon's hands a sceptre of command which, if wielded with ordinary skill and moderation, must long have ruled continental Europe from one extremity to the other: he now almost seemed what he had so often been called, "the man of destiny," intrusted with some high mission which it was not given to the mere potentates of earth to resist. The falsehood, cruelty, and treachery, which marked his first steps after the acquisition of this vast increase of power, soon proved that the mission intrusted to him was of the same character as that intrusted to Attila and Tamerlane.

On the ocean, events had been fatal to his hopes. A French and Spanish fleet, intended, as we now know, to surprise St Helena, attack Surinam, Berbice, and Demerara, and throw supplies into St Domingo, had sailed from Europe, and reached the West Indies in safety. Deceived by false reports, or informed of Lord Nelson's arrival in the Caribbean seas, they made no attempt to carry their principal instructions into effect, and again made sail for Europe, closely pursued by the British. Arrived in the Bay of Biscay, they were attacked by Admiral Calder, who captured two of their ships; but having taken up the

Spanish squadron of Ferrol, and refitted their damaged ships, they made sail for Cadiz, where they obtained farther reinforcements. With thirty-three ships of the line, they next steered for the Straits of Gibraltar; but attacked by Lord Nelson with twenty-seven ships off Cape Trafalgar, they were completely defeated. Nelson was mortally wounded in the action, and only survived to hear that he was victor in the greatest battle ever fought upon the ocean, and that his country's flag had no longer a rival on the seas.

Admiral Villeneuve, taken prisoner in the action, and liberated on parole, committed suicide at Rennes, before he reached Paris; Napoleon afterwards accused this unfortunate officer of having, by disobedience of orders, frustrated the projected landing in England. The Admiral was, we are told, to have entered the Channel on his return from the West Indies, raised the blockade of Brest, and, joined by the French fleet stationed there, was then to have protected the Boulogne *flotilla* while conveying the Grand Army to the shores of Britain. Not to say that there is great inconsistency between these orders and the authentic instructions we know the Admiral to have received on his departure from France, we must be allowed to doubt how far an officer of high rank and experience would directly disobey the orders of an absolute and all-powerful sovereign. Mistakes and slight deviations from orders are, unfortunately, too frequent to occasion much surprise; but that an admiral, commanding a large fleet, and intrusted with a most important service, should thrice sail directly south—first to Ferrol, then to Cadiz, and lastly to the Mediterranean, when ordered to sail north and enter the British Channel, is what few will believe on the mere word of Napoleon Bonaparte. The boasted project of

invading England, under the protection of Admiral Villeneuve's fleet, was evidently an after-thought, put forward like the gigantic rhodomontade of Acre—like so many others we shall yet have to record—in the poor and puerile hope of concealing the real cause of failure, and retaining a fancied appearance of infallibility. Philip II. acted a nobler part on the loss of *Armada*; for when the unhappy commander of that boasted armament came, on his return to Spain, to throw himself at the feet of his sovereign, the king received him with kindness, saying, "Arise, my Lord Duke; I did not send forth my ships to combat against the elements." This courteous act of grace, trifling in itself, cast a redeeming ray of light on the dark character of the Spanish monarch; and shows, perhaps, how easy it is for the rulers of mankind to gather golden opinions from the ruled, by the simplest expressions of feeling and sympathy. But Napoleon had neither the feelings that prompt, nor the ability to affect them, and invariably cast on his inferiors all the blame of his errors and his failures.

But naval victories alone could no longer check the progress of the French Autocrat. On the Continent all opposition had ceased; Austria had purchased peace at a heavy loss; and France, always thirsting for military glory, and rendered wild with joy by the rich harvest of laurels her sovereign and soldiers had gained, readily sacrificed even the name and semblance of Freedom on the altar of Fame and Conquest. Nor was the Emperor slow to avail himself of these advantages. Naples, so long oppressed by French armies, had joined the coalition; and a general order, the first of the series that followed, now proclaimed that the "House of Naples had ceased to reign. The kingdom was soon occupied, and Joseph Bonaparte placed on the throne, at the same

time that the crown of Holland was conferred on his brother Louis. Cruelty and oppression kept pace with these steps of ambition. The different countries occupied by French troops were crushed beneath the weight of heavy contributions levied for the benefit of French officers and *employés ;* men of the highest rank not disdaining to enrich themselves by the plunder of poor peasants and humble citizens. It was on this subject that Niebuhr expressed himself to Lieber, the author of the Reminiscences : "Nothing," said the great historian, "can exceed the repulsive avarice displayed by the French during the period of their conquests. I say it of the whole of them from the highest to the lowest, their greed of money"—*Geldgier*—"was disgusting. You were then too young to know the details ; but I know them. No other nation has evinced this mean trait of character : all have levied contributions and behaved harshly enough at times, but never in so open and barefaced a manner. The French were low in soul,"—*im innersten Wesen ;*—"and, as a matter of course, behaved without the least shame or reserve. There were exceptions, no doubt, but they were only exceptions."

Worse however remains to be told. A bookseller of the name of Palm, of the free and imperial city of Nuremberg, had, in the ordinary course of business, received and published a pamphlet, in which the ambition of Napoleon was arraigned in strong terms. After some delay he was arrested and conducted to Brünnau, which the French troops still occupied in violation of the treaty of Presburg : he was there tried by a military commission, and sentenced to death. The unhappy man was not, as falsely stated in the report of his sentence, allowed the benefit of counsel, which the French military-law grants to all accused persons : he denied to the last that

he had the slightest knowledge of the contents of the pamphlet, till it was made the subject of accusation: but his asseveration was of course disregarded, where every appearance of justice was completely set aside. It was in vain that the ladies of Brünnau presented a petition to General St Hilaire, imploring mercy, or at least a respite for the condemned: that officer declared it was out of his power to interfere, as the order for the prisoner's immediate execution had arrived from Paris. He was shot accordingly on the 26th August.

The pamphlet for which Palm suffered does not, as Bignon and the few French writers who allude to the subject tacitly admit, contain a single word or hint inciting to murder or rebellion. When, on the one hand, we consider the power, might, and station of Napoleon, and the humble and utter insignificance of his victim on the other; when we recollect, that this dark deed of murder could spring only from the working of a heart uncontrolled by any power of mind, and rendered merciless by the slightest cause of irritation; we shall look in vain for a fouler and a blacker crime among the long list of those which have handed down the names of so many Roman Emperors to the undying detestation of mankind. The ruler of mighty nations, the victor of kings, the chieftain at whose very beck hundreds of thousands were ready to rush to battle, and whose every wish fortune had hastened to gratify, yet condescends to stain his hands with the blood of an humble tradesman! It is hardly possible to conceive a man of the most ordinary intellect, who, having attained such elevation, would not be raised above the mire of meaner passions: but, as we here see, nothing could elevate the soul of Napoleon. This act of ruthless violence, committed by foreign oppressors on German ground, marked the deep degradation into which the Empire had fallen; and the

haughty insolence with which the French ruler thus treated an ancient and long honoured nation, was keenly felt by the whole of the German people,—divided even as they were into so many states and sovereignties. And if the hatred thus engendered did not show itself at the time, it still helped to lay the foundation for the retribution which followed. Gagern, though the representative only of a small German principality, did not hesitate to speak out manfully on this occasion. "A time will come, *Monsieur le Minister,*" he said to Talleyrand, "when this national insult will be washed out in torrents of blood. It can never be forgotten;" and truly, indeed, were the gallant words fulfilled.

Nor was treachery wanting to complete the career we are here recording.

In their advance to the Danube, the French troops had violated the neutrality of Prussia; and the cabinet of Berlin, justly irritated besides by the many insults offered to Germany, sent Count Haugewitz to the French head-quarters to demand, not only reparation for the violation of the territory, but the entire evacuation of Germany by the French troops. War was the alternative in case of refusal. Haugewitz, always the advocate of France in the Prussian councils, delayed at the very moment he should have acted; allowed the battle of Austerlitz to be fought; and then, instead of nailing, as a Roman would have done, his country's mandate to the very banners of the victors, suppressed the real object of his mission, and accepting Hanover as an indemnity for the insult offered, signed a treaty of alliance with the conqueror! Conscious, perhaps, of the shameful nature of his conduct, he took care to stipulate that the disgraceful compact should be strictly concealed from the Allies till ratified by the king: but in taking this precaution he only forgot with whom he was stipulating.

Napoleon was at this moment negotiating the peace of Presburg with Austria; and the latter power, still trusting to the promised support of Prussia, was holding out against some of the most oppressive demands of France—when, in direct violation of the promise given, the Haugewitz treaty was laid before the commissioners the very day after it had been signed! The Austrians, in despair, and seeing themselves abandoned, yielded to the French demands; and left Prussia alone in the arena, exposed to the haughty taunts and boundless arrogance of the French Emperor.

Haugewitz was some years afterwards permitted to publish a justification of his conduct; and the main ground on which he rests his defence ought to serve as an important lesson to statesmen. The ex-Minister tells us, "that he entered in amicable arrangements with Napoleon, fearing that, in case of a rupture, the victorious French army would invade Silesia and the southern provinces of the monarchy." It is afflicting to think that the fate of empires should ever have been intrusted to an individual capable of reasoning in such a manner. A gentleman undertaking a diplomatic mission of the highest importance, at such a time, and under such circumstances, should at least have known so much of military affairs, as to be fully aware that an army, situated as the French were after the battle of Austerlitz, situated at a distance from reinforcements, in hostile provinces, in the depth of winter, and surrounded by numerous and yet unbroken enemies, would deem the power of holding their own ground the greatest good fortune which could befall them; and would certainly not think of invading other and still more distant countries. Shortly before the war, this very Haugewitz had said, in an altercation with the well-known Colonel

Massenbach :"*—" I know nothing, and pretend to know nothing, of military affairs ; but I certainly do lay claim to some knowledge of diplomacy ;" and the value of diplomatic sagacity, unsupported by military knowledge, was here fully and fatally illustrated by his conduct.

The death of Mr Pitt, on the 23d of January 1806, brought the Whig party into power, and placed Mr Fox at the head of the foreign office : and a petty trick on the part of the French Emperor having led to a correspondence between the two governments, negotiations for peace were commenced. And it was in the course of these negotiations that Napoleon offered, not only to restore Hanover, which he had shortly before given to Prussia, but to give the Balearic Islands to the King of Sicily in exchange for the latter island, which he was desirous of reannexing to the kingdom of Naples : thus proposing to rob two allies for his own benefit.

Bignon, speaking of this negotiation, says, " that England might have obtained terms as favourable in 1806 as in 1814." This is no doubt very true as far as England alone was concerned ; but the diplomatic historian does not add, as he was in duty bound to do, that England could not, in 1806, have obtained security for the independence of the Continental States ; and as she was fighting the cause of oppressed nations as much as her own, was in honour bound to continue the contest till the object was attained. The French historian pays our country a great, though no doubt involuntary, compliment by the remark ; and shows that the conduct of Britain was as firm in 1806 as it was generous and disinterested in 1814. The same writer, whose talents place him far above the ordinary idolaters of Napoleon,

* Historische Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Ferfalls des Preusischen Staats, von dem Obersten von Massenbach.

also repeats, and with evident satisfaction, a remark made by Luchessini on the occasion of this negotiation. "England," said the Prussian diplomatist, "would not resign a single negro cabin to ensure the safety of Berlin." These words were no doubt well suited to point a libel in the *Moniteur*; but to repeat them, as if they implied an established truth, and that ten years after the peace in which England had resigned so many splendid and valuable conquests, for the sole purpose of cementing friendship and amity between the long estranged nations, proves plainly, indeed, that the men of the empire and revolution could see nothing except through the jaundiced medium of disappointed ambition.

The negotiation with England failed; but the offers made by Napoleon naturally excited the indignation of the cabinets of Madrid and Berlin. Nor was this the only cause of complaint urged by Prussia. The treaty of Presburg was no sooner signed, than Napoleon, availing himself of the newly-acquired power, formed what was termed the Confederation of the Rhine—a league of the south-western states of Germany under the protection of France; and having placed himself at its head, notified to the Emperor Francis, "that he could no longer recognise a German Empire or German Emperor."

Not an arm was raised, not a voice was heard, in favour of the time-honoured institution that for so many centuries had grown and strengthened with the world's progress and civilisation. Germany beheld its own funeral in cold and apathetic lethargy; the spirit of its chivalry seemed extinct, and the nation was so discouraged and depressed, that it no longer wished for defenders; and despairing of itself, was anxious that others also should despair of its cause,

in order not to excite the suspicion of the all-powerful oppressor. Under such circumstances, the Emperor Francis had no resource but to lay down the crown for which he had so often drawn the sword, and for which his children and his people had bled in so many gallant though unsuccessful battle-fields. In a noble and dignified address, the generous monarch acquainted Germany on the 6th August 1806, that he no longer wore the Imperial Crown, and that the German Empire had ceased to exist.

As in this transaction Napoleon had assumed dictatorial authority over Germany, Prussia proposed to restore the independence of the country by forming a league of the northern states, capable of balancing the power of the southern ; but though the French Emperor gave at first a nominal consent to the project, he interdicted several of the powers from joining the confederacy, and threw obstacles in the way of others, that rendered the realisation of the plan utterly impossible. No independent country had ever before been treated with such indignity ; and when Prussia demanded reparation for such conduct, and for the proposed restitution of Hanover, the answers were of so haughty and insulting a nature as to leave the government no alternative but an appeal to arms.

Ever since the peace of Basle in 1795, when Prussia withdrew from the coalition against France, the cabinet of Berlin, actuated by a jealousy of Austria, had pursued a line of policy so undignified, so detrimental to the cause of Germany and subservient to France, that little reliance was placed on its firmness. The very ministers were known to receive pecuniary donations from Napoleon ; and the Haugewitz treaty having damped the hopes awakened by the gleam of gallantry displayed at

the commencement of the Austerlitz campaign, none trusted their resolution: they justly were forsaken who forsook; and when forced into the field, had only a small Saxon army to assist them in contending against the vast force that Napoleon hurled against the devoted land. Torrents of vulgar abuse heaped upon the people, the government, the queen, and different members of the royal family, preceded the march of the French army.

Russia was too distant to lend immediate aid; and England was still the unready in military enterprises. Success had attended the British arms in naval and colonial warfare, and many valuable settlements had been conquered; but these minor advantages, gained at a distance, could not check the power of France: and the Whigs, proving as incapable war-ministers as their predecessors had been, were totally unprepared to strike a decisive blow when the opportunity was so fairly presented: Prussia stood, therefore, alone in the lists.

But the people were enthusiastic in the cause; and the army, though numerically far inferior to the French, were brave, zealous, and well-disciplined. Ably guided, they could have made a formidable stand; but from the first, the weakness and wavering of the cabinet was transferred to the camp, and tended mainly to occasion the ruin that so rapidly followed.

The Prussian army, eager to avenge their country's wrongs, and maintain their military fame, took the field in a bold spirit; and, if well commanded, would probably have maintained a gallant contest: but under the Duke of Brunswick, a man totally destitute of skill, though possessing great personal bravery, little could be expected from the best efforts of the troops. The Duke's age has also been urged against him; but the objection cannot

hold: for Blücher and Suvaroff were, when older in years, the most active and energetic commanders of their time; and the Duke, though turned of seventy, was a strong and athletic man. He had seen much service; but his great military experience had taught him nothing, for he had no military ability: and wanting resources himself, allowed vanity—the bane of so many military men—to prevent him from seeking, or appearing to desire, the advice of others. His ideas never extended beyond the practice of the drill-ground; and a ruthless and unfeeling martinet on parade, he was in the field a commander without confidence, and a soldier without enthusiasm.

The dissensions and indecisions that marked the military councils of Prussia, even within hearing of the hostile guns, belong to history, and cannot be detailed here. An advance to the banks of the Maine, an attack on the French corps before they could be assembled, had been recommended by Colonel Bülow, then a captive in the very prison in which he ended his days; but the man of genius knew that the counsel was above the reach of those for whom it was given, and foretold the result even from the first. "Frightened by their own boldness in resorting to arms," he said, "they will halt about the Saale, and there be destroyed." And to the very letter was this strange prophecy fulfilled.

The Marquis de Luchessini, a foreigner who, from being reader to Frederick II., had risen to eminence in the state, and had just returned from his embassy to Paris, gave the fatal advice which made generals and marshals halt in mid career, and adopt the proposal of a vain diplomatist, instead of following out the bold and skilful plan of the able and highly gifted soldier. "Napoleon will not act offensively," said the diplomatic

Marquis, at a council of war held at Weimar a few days before the battle of Jena; "he will not burden himself with the reproach of being the aggressor, and will rather leave it to others to attack him." Ever ready to adopt timid counsel, the wavering and irresolute listened to the words of folly, and halted, without any fixed object or position, on the Saale, at the very time when the French masses were rolling round their left flank. It was in vain that Colonel Massenbach, the Assistant Quartermaster-General, foretold the certain ruin impending over the army,—foretold with wonderful accuracy every step of the enemy; it was in vain that the officers almost mutinied against their commander: the hour of death had struck, and the hand of fate was no longer to be arrested in its fatal progress.

The gallant Prince Louis was defeated and slain at Saalefield; General Tauenzien was attacked, and pressed back with loss; and still the doomed host stood motionless and inactive along the banks of the Saale.

With an army of 140,000 men, all war-trained and spoil-breathing soldiers, Napoleon reached the plains of Gera. Finding no enemy in his front, he wheeled his masses round to the left, scattered them over a vast extent of country, and facing to the west, the very direction whence he had come, moved down upon the foe. Marshal Davoust with 40,000 men, now forming the extreme right, seized Naumburg, completely headed the main body of the Prussian army, which, too late awakened from its stupor, was moving by Auerstädt towards Magdeburg. Bernadotte, by an intermediate direction, marched on Dornburg and Apolda; while the Emperor himself, gathering together the remaining corps of his army, about 80,000 men, directed his march upon Jena, where he expected to find the King

of Prussia at the head of his principal forces. But here he was confronted by the left wing of the Prussian army commanded by Prince Hohenloe, a brave and skilful officer, who was preparing to follow the retrograde movement of the main army at the very moment when he was attacked. The front of the long Prussian column thus found itself opposed at Auerstädt, while at the distance of a day's march in the rear, the last division was assailed near Jena; Bernadotte, at the same time, marching into the opening left between the two great divisions of the army.

The Prussians, on this eventful day, brought about 90,000 men into action; of these, 50,000 fought against the inferior numbers of Davoust, and 40,000 against the main army of Napoleon. Bernadotte's corps, by strictly obeying orders, did not come into action; for which the commander is invariably blamed by French historians.

The details of the battles of Jena and Auerstädt belong not to our subject; and a few words indicating the general result can alone be added here.

The main body of the Prussian army marching towards Magdeburg, found itself unexpectedly opposed at Auerstädt by the corps of Davoust, which was mistaken for the whole French army. An action was immediately commenced, in which the Duke of Brunswick received a mortal wound: the second in command shared the same fate; and the first line failed to make any impression on the French. Blücher offered to renew the attack with the second line, which had not fought; but the king, though he at first sanctioned the proposal, arrested the onset, and it was resolved to halt and wait for news from Prince Hohenloe's corps.

These came with the ordinary speed of evil tidings: the Prince had been defeated; and the army, arrested

in front by Davoust, followed by the victorious troops of Napoleon, endeavoured to reach Magdeburg and the Elbe by a circuitous march through cross-roads. At first the retreat bore some semblance of order; but the two defeated armies falling back upon each other, and Prince Hohenloe's troops mixing during the night with those of the king's army, as the main body was called, the whole fell into disorder, which darkness augmented, till daybreak displayed the motley crowd moving along in a state of total disorganization,—infantry, cavalry, artillery, all mixed up together in wild and inextricable confusion. Fifty thousand men only reached Magdeburg; and though some regularity was here restored, the *morale* of the troops could not be re-established; and the most incredible folly marked every farther step of this ill-fated host, once distinguished for talents, bravery, and conduct. In the midst of fertile provinces, and well-stored magazines, they declared that immediate famine was threatening them; and with tumbrels overflowing, they fancied themselves in want of ammunition.

The army marched towards the Oder; but every hour brought fresh losses. The Quartermaster-General, not recollecting that he could hardly ride thirty miles and hold a conference with a French marshal in the course of one brief hour, mistook the western shore of the Lake of Prenzlau for the eastern; and the commander-in-chief, a cavalry officer of bravery and experience, forgetting alike his geography and horsemanship, made 10,000 men lay down their arms in open field before a few squadrons of French cavalry! The detached corps followed too readily the example of the main body; and Blücher alone upheld in this period of darkness the honour of the Prussian name. Beset by French troops, attacked by the corps of Bernadotte, Soult, and Lannes,

the intrepid soldier fought to the last extremity; and only surrendered after his last cartridge had been expended, and his last loaf of bread consumed. The last to strike his country's banner in the hour of adversity, he was, as we shall see, the first to raise it in the hour of hope and prosperity.

In the short space of twenty-five days, the Prussian army, so long the admiration of Europe, had been destroyed: a few scattered detachments only reached the Oder; all the rest had fallen or passed beneath the Caudine forks. And now followed a train of disasters, the result of weakness, cowardice and imbecility, such as no history has recorded, and no time ever witnessed. Strong fortresses, provided with ample garrisons and supplied with all the necessaries of war, surrendered at the first summons of the enemy;—men trained in honour's school, grown grey in arms and in the faithful discharge of duty, forgot, amid the storm of adversity, all that loyalty, patriotism, and professional rank imposed upon them;—and at the very moment when they should have nailed their country's flag to the mast, upheld to the last the sinking fortunes of the State, and perished, if need were, with its untarnished colours streaming in the breeze, they bent like cravens to the hand of oppression, and fell prostrate to the earth at the first sound of hostile trumpets. Language almost wants terms fully to reprobate such frightful ignominy—fully to express the indignation the recital of such conduct must awaken in every manly and honest breast. Stettin, commanding the passage of the Oder, surrendered to some squadrons of light cavalry; Custrin, inaccessible amid the marshes of the same river, submitted at the approach of a single French regiment, and, as Venice had done before, sent the boats necessary to bring over the conquerors! Spandau opened its gates on the first summons; Ham-

eln, called the Gibraltar of Germany, and garrisoned with 8000 men, did not fire a shot; and Magdeburg, the pride of the Prussian monarchy, commanding both banks of the Elbe, and defended by 22,000 men, yielded without the shadow of resistance to Marshal Ney's corps, which had not a single battering-gun in its train!

It is now well understood that the catastrophe of Prenzlau tended in a great measure to produce these overwhelming misfortunes. Report had magnified that fatal event into a total surrender of the whole Prussian army; and weak men yielded too readily to the suggestions of timidity when it whispered the fatal tale, so often told during these wars, "that all was lost; that farther resistance was vain, and could only occasion needless ruin and additional bloodshed."

The closely-balanced fortunes of the next campaign prove how criminal were the consequences of such speculations, and the fate of these Prussian commanders holds out a memorable lesson to military men, warning them never to allow political conjectures to influence their professional conduct, or to lead them from the clear paths of honour which its duties prescribe. It was universally asserted, and long believed, that the unfortunate commanders of these fortresses had been bribed, and that French gold had made them traitors to their Sovereign: and the absence of all intelligible motives for their craven submission seemed to justify the opinion. It is now certain, however, that in no instance was there the slightest foundation for such suspicion. The officers were, no doubt, guilty of treachery—they betrayed the charge intrusted to them; but their treachery was entirely gratuitous: the indignant reproaches of their bleeding country were the only rewards of their dastardly conduct.

Speaking some years afterwards to General Minutoli on the subject of his army, the king expressed himself to the following effect :—"I knew the strength, value, and bravery of the army, and what it could effect under good guidance ; but I was also well aware of its defects. Its organization was antiquated and not suited to the times, and its system of tactics still dated from the period of the Seven Years' War. The *materielle* was ill calculated for contending against the mode of fighting the French had adopted ; the lumbering trains of baggage that followed our troops, rendered us too dependent on supplies derived from magazines, and prevented us from executing those rapid movements, which the fatal habit of gathering requisitions enabled the enemy to perform with comparative ease. We had no want, indeed, of experienced commanders ; the Duke of Brunswick, Field-Marshal Möllendorf, and others, stood high in the opinion of the army and the country, who estimated them by what they had been in the days of their glory. But none of these officers would perceive the progress which the art of war had made since the commencement of the French Revolution. I would willingly have introduced some reforms in the service ; but, young and inexperienced, I did not venture to oppose the views of laurel-crowned veterans, who had grown grey in arms, and ought, I believed, to know better than I could. Had I introduced reforms against the opinions of the distinguished veterans of the army, all the blame, in case of disaster, would have been thrown upon me. 'The young gentleman,' the world would have said, 'had no experience : he undermined the old structures, undermined the fame and foundation of the Prussian army, which thus new-fangled and remodelled, was sure to fall together at the very first blow. Had he allowed the tried

institutions of the Seven Years' War to continue in force; had he followed the advice of the time-honoured veterans of the army, things would have taken a different turn, and the country would have been saved.'" *

That such language would have been held, is more than probable; but the prospect of similar remarks did not arrest the tactical improvements of Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII., and Frederick II. The king, whose excellent judgment, but total want of confidence in himself, is well known, should have recollected that aged members of all professions, more especially of the profession of arms, are invariably tenacious, often blind adherents indeed, of established practices. And when men have risen to deserved fame and honour by long following certain rules and regulations, their ideas will naturally have a tendency to become fixed in favour of practices and institutions to which they owe their elevation, and which they must often have seen crowned with victory: they would not be mere children of clay were it otherwise. The profession of arms demands, however, unbiassed minds from all who aspire to act the part of supreme leaders; for it is a *close* profession, practised only under superior orders; it is not open to competition; there can be no private practice to check the course of official error where it may exist, and forward the cause of professional science and just principles in opposition to official views. The armed force of a nation can look only to its chief, whose judgment must therefore be free, and totally unshackled by routine habit and predilections. At the head of the armed forces of empires, men must be able to look beyond the lustre of their own

* Beitrage zu einer Biographie Freidrich Wilhelms III., von General-Lt Minutoli. Berlin, 1843

fame, must take clear views of the progress of society and of general knowledge, and have it thus in their power to make even the unhallowed science of war keep pace with the better sciences of civilization, which it is called upon to shield and protect.

Napoleon is at Berlin ; and it will no doubt be expected, that after the many deeds of cruelty laid to his charge in this brief introduction, we should at least give him credit for one act of clemency,—the pardon extended to Prince Hatzfeld. A full statement of the case may be seen in the last volume of this work ; and if a plain tale dispels the fable which has furnished painters with subjects and poets with themes for adulation, the blame must rest with those who, from unworthy motives or mere credulity, disfigured and gave historical circulation to a trivial incident totally undeserving of notice ; and only brought forward with ridiculous exaggerations, for the purpose of gracing a man who, had he deserved praise, was in a position to obtain it without the aid of fiction.

The splendid victories gained during the Prussian campaign, augmented not only the physical force at the command of Napoleon, but the dread of his name also : many actually thought him invincible ; and more made the belief an excuse for the ready submission to his will. France, intoxicated with these new triumphs, achieved over hitherto respected troops, readily sent forth her myriads of conscripts to fill the imperial ranks ; while the resources of conquered countries were used with ruthless and unsparing hands ; and a despotic line of policy adopted towards neutral states, such as no age had ever witnessed.

The Elector of Hesse had refused to join the Prussian cause, and had concluded a treaty of neutrality with

France; but no sooner was the battle of Jena gained, than he was despoiled of his dominions, and the Electorate taken possession of by French troops. The unoffending Hanse-towns were in like manner occupied, and without a shadow of pretext. The territory of Brunswick shared the same fate, because the Duke had fought in the Prussian ranks, though the Duchy had remained neutral; at the best a doubtful plea of security, and one that could certainly not be maintained against Napoleon, who besides treated the aged and dying Prince, wounded in the battle of Auerstädt, with low and vulgar insolence.

It was from Berlin that the Emperor issued the memorable Decrees which take their name from that capital. By these edicts the British islands were declared in a state of blockade; Continental Europe was prohibited from carrying on any commercial intercourse with them; and armies of *douaniers* and *gens d'armes* were stationed along the shores of all the countries subject to French sway, in order to watch over the strict execution of what was termed the *Continental System*;—a measure certain, it was said, to strike a deadly blow at the power and prosperity of England. Though the extravagant admiration of these decrees expressed by so many French writers has gradually sobered down, it was long the fashion to represent them as a splendid conception of genius, which only failed of success in consequence of some great fatality that lay far beyond the reach of ordinary speculation. We shall not stop here to inquire whether any "fatality," unless arising from unexpected revolutions of nature, can exonerate politicians from the failure of mighty undertakings not resting on the conduct of a few subordinate agents, but depending for success on calculations that could only be

founded on a perfect knowledge of the habits, feelings, and modes of thinking of entire nations ; we only state the language in which the Berlin Decrees are spoken of, under the belief that they originated in the mind of Napoleon, though the first idea of such a project belongs to the celebrated Colonel Bülow,—a man of great genius, and as hostile to England as Napoleon himself.

In the "Military and Political History of the Year 1805," this writer details such a plan at length, and recommends its adoption to the Continental States. The fact of the book having been condemned as a libel on the Russian and Prussian governments, all the accessible copies having been destroyed, and the author himself arrested and thrown into prison, called attention to a production otherwise little deserving of notice. The work became so well known even in France, that Napoleon's first step, on arriving at Berlin, was to send Bignon to Spandau for the purpose of liberating the author, who was erroneously supposed to be confined in that fortress, though Bülow was in the dungeons of Colberg, where he died. Whatever, therefore, may be the merits or demerits of the Continental System, Napoleon's share of the blame or praise to which it is entitled, extends no farther than its adoption ; the original conception belongs to another and, in truth, a better man.

In issuing these Decrees, the French Emperor again proved how little he was acquainted with the power, strength, and resources of Britain : like so many foreigners, he looked upon Britain as a commercial country *only* ; fancied it a sort of Venice or Genoa, which possessed no solid basis for the floating strength embarked in its ships ; and forgot that it was a great and extensive empire, more richly cultivated than any other on the

face of the earth, possessing vast colonies with which a lucrative trade was always carried on, and was besides peopled by a race of men distinguished, in all ages, far more for naval skill and martial prowess than for those very pursuits of industry against which he was now waging an ignoble war. "The Berlin Decrees," says a French author of ability, "demanded of the people of the Continent sacrifices which could only be expected from passion and enthusiasm;" and as these certainly did not exist in their favour, a general war of smuggling was waged against them. Bribery and corruption were carried to the highest degree; to deceive the *douane* was looked upon as a meritorious action; high functionaries, both civil and military, received money, almost openly, to overlook the introduction of English and Colonial merchandise, or to show indulgence to offenders who had "only been arrested for smuggling." Spies and informers were appointed to watch the authorities, and merely augmented the number of the venal; severe examples were occasionally made of detected culprits; but these added only to the odium with which the decrees and all who administered them were looked upon, till in the end the very name of *douanier* became a term of scorn and reproach as far as the power of Napoleon extended.

The Russian armies, though distant and slow in their progress, had passed the Vistula, and been joined by a few feeble Prussian corps; and it now became necessary to give them the meeting. Nor were the French tardy in doing so; and it seems that Napoleon's force was at this moment greater than any he had ever before commanded. Besides the army that under Prince Jerome invaded Silesia, he was himself at the head of 200,000 men in Prussia.

On the 28th November the advanced guard of the French entered the ancient capital of Poland. The enthusiasm of the people was at its height: the most extravagant acclamations of joy hailed the arrival of Murat's troops wherever they appeared; the slavery of years was instantly forgotten; in the enemies of their oppressors the multitude beheld only liberators; and already in their excited fancies saw their country independent, and the light of freedom dispersing the heavy gloom which had so long overspread the land of their fathers. From far and near the voice of justice and patriotism called on the mighty victor to emancipate a brave and chivalrous people, so barbarously enchained. It was a deed reserved for the strong of hand and high of heart, and certain to obtain for him who should achieve it, the highest garland ever gathered in glory's cause. This garland was offered to Napoleon, but his dull eye saw it not: on no chord of that cold and ignoble heart could honour and generosity strike with effect. To him power and dominion alone constituted greatness; and by following these idols, he forfeited the most splendid opportunity of performing an act of true heroism ever offered to an individual in modern times.

Of the Polish campaigns little can be said here. The Russians, though greatly inferior in numbers, fought with distinguished bravery, and certainly maintained the field in the sanguinary combats of Pultusk, Golomyn, and Eylau. But inferior to the French in skill, resources, military practice and organization, they were not, at the close of battle, in any condition to profit by the success which mere bravery had achieved. Nor was General Benningsen, however bold in action, an officer capable of contending against the war-trained marshals of France. Cold, haughty, and pompous, one of the murderers of

the Emperor Paul, he was as much disliked by the Czar and the ministers as by his own subordinates; and as he was only placed at the head of the army by an act of insubordination on the part of some of the generals, and by his own false report of the battle of Pultusk, which he represented as a splendid victory, could only maintain his situation by the uncertain aid of intrigue. He was, besides, totally destitute of moral courage, as necessary to every officer holding an independent command as personal courage itself. During the winter, two opportunities presented themselves for striking with effect against the French, who were greatly reduced by the casualties of battle and the severity of the season. Benningsen raised his arm indeed, but feared to strike home at the very moment when the foe lay almost defenceless at his mercy.

The French army was at this moment in a very precarious situation; and Count Gagern, who was at Warsaw with the *corps diplomatique*, and had good means of acquiring information, has the following passage on the subject:—"The battles of Golomyn, Pultusk, and Ostrolenska, had been no easy victories, and had produced an unfavourable effect on the impatient army, accustomed to rapid success. The dissatisfaction was greatly augmented by the result of the battle of Eylau; and from this day I date the commencement of Napoleon's fall, and declining popularity. On both sides the loss had been enormous; and the Emperor's total want of feeling, in riding, with a smile on his lips, through the midst of the frozen corpses that strewed the blood-stained snow of the frightful battle-field, caused universal disgust, though such smiles often result from scorn, exhausted spirits, or awkwardness of feeling.

"The army evinced from this time an evident reluctance to renew active operations: battles, they said, were reduced to mere scenes of carnage, and fought only to gratify the wild and insatiable ambition of a single individual. The science of war was at an end, and victory the reward only of those who had the strongest and most numerous battalions, and could stand killing the longest. Many already spoke of Napoleon as of one half deranged, and whom it would be well to get rid of; nor was it necessary to court such speeches, they were heard in every direction."

Napoleon was sufficiently conscious, indeed, of the precarious situation of his army; for he made some proposals of peace during the winter, and Marshal, then General, Blücher, when about to be exchanged against the French Marshal Victor, was detained some time near the French head-quarters, in order to be made the bearer of pacific proposals to the King of Prussia. He had an interview with the Emperor at the Castle of Finkenstein; and General Eisenhart, then a captain in his suite, gives in his reminiscences* the following account of the meeting between these two opposite characters:—

"I was, of course, exceedingly impatient to know the subject of this conversation, as well as the manner in which it had been carried on; for Blücher spoke very little French, and Napoleon understood still less German. 'Oh! we got on admirably,' said Blücher. The Emperor commenced the conversation by saying that he was happy to become acquainted with the bravest General in the Prussian army; to which I replied, that I had always entertained an ardent wish to behold his Majesty, and only regretted my inability to make my-

* Zeitschrift für Kunst, Wissenschaft und Geschichte des Krieges. Berlin, 1843.

self understood in French. 'That is of no consequence,' continued Napoleon; 'I understand a little German, and you a little French, so we shall do very well together.' He then took me by the button of the coat, and led me towards the window, where the conversation was continued; on my part, by mixing up a little Latin and a few words of German and Polish, with my bad French, which the Emperor seemed to find perfectly intelligible. He asked why the King had made war upon him? 'When I am obliged to fight the Prussians,' he said, 'I feel as if I were forced to strike one of my own hands with the other; I wish to make peace with the King, on terms that shall be agreeable to him. It is not necessary that he should join me,—not at least immediately, nor till I have driven the Russians out of the country. With the latter, however, I will have no terms; for they are bribed by English gold, and not to be depended upon.' After a pause, during which he continued to twist and turn the button of my coat, he proceeded to say, that 'he would not object to a peace with the Russians, but should require some security for their breaking off all connection with England.' After a few more words to the same purpose, he requested me to communicate the subject of our conference to the King; and then at parting gave me both hands in the most friendly manner possible."

"I am sorry," said Eisenhart, "that the Emperor's politeness should have gained so much on your Excellency, as to make you forget a very essential matter on this occasion." "How so?" asked Blücher in his quick Hussar style. "Your Excellency carried on this conversation with the Emperor near the window, and you forgot to throw his Majesty out of it." "By Jove!" replied Blücher, with all possible seriousness, "I never

thought of it; the idea never entered my head; and yet it would have been feasible enough."

It does not appear that Napoleon made a convert of the Prussian General on this occasion; for the latter no sooner reached the head-quarters of the allied sovereigns, than he represented the reduced condition of the French army in the strongest light possible: he offered with 30,000 men to drive them back beyond the Oder, and pledged his head for the success of the enterprise. The Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia were willing to sanction the attempt; but General Benningsen opposed it in the most decided manner: and this project, like the proposed negotiation, also fell to the ground; leaving both parties to employ the rest of the winter in gathering strength for the renewal of the contest on the return of spring.

The vast superiority of Napoleon's resources enabled him to take the field with armies far greater than those which his adversaries could command; and the battle of Friedland, gained as usual by "the strongest and most numerous battalions," terminated the war in his favour.

The Emperor Alexander, discouraged by so many reverses, receiving no assistance from England, proposed a truce, and held an interview with the conqueror, which ended in the treaty of Tilsit, and a close alliance between Russia and France.

This treaty, which casts more discredit on the contracting parties than any recorded in modern history, reduced Prussia to the rank of a third-rate power, surrendered the north of Germany to Napoleon, and gave him free hand in regard to the Pyrenean Peninsula. In return for these concessions, the French ruler consented to see Sweden and Turkey, the ancient and natural allies of France, despoiled by Russia; the Czar being

allowed to wrest Finland from the one, and the Moldavian provinces from the other. We shall see, at a future time, how heavy was the penalty Napoleon had to pay for this treacherous and impolitic conduct. The absurd project of an overland invasion of British India was agitated at Tilsit; and the more practicable partition of Turkey resolved upon. It was determined that the neutral powers of Portugal and Denmark should be invited to join the coalition against England, and that force should be used to obtain their consent if necessary.

This unfortunate clause obliged Britain to attack Copenhagen in self-defence, and carry away the Danish fleet which was to have been employed against her. Though successful, this was the most afflicting, and to the victors the most painful enterprise undertaken during the war.

In other quarters the British arms had experienced reverses; and the disciplined soldiers of Britain, who were soon to appear on the scene as the first and foremost soldiers of modern times, were defeated in South America and Egypt, by untrained adversaries from whom resistance was hardly anticipated. At Constantinople a British fleet was repulsed, owing neither indeed to want of skill nor courage, but to the unfortunate tendency of the British government to place naval and military men under the direction of civil functionaries. Here a gallant admiral was subjected to the control of a diplomatic agent, who, in attempting to carry everything by negotiation, was defeated at his own weapons even by Turks.

Completely master of Germany, Napoleon erected the territories of Brunswick, Cassel, and other dominions, into the kingdom of Westphalia, which was given to his brother Jerome. His sisters, Eliza and Pauline, had

already been provided with principalities in Italy; the first being placed on the ducal throne of Massa Carrara, the second on that of Lucca. Fame whispered no light tales of these ladies; their gallantries were open and avowed; and yet we find the man whom it has pleased so many writers to represent as the strict champion of morality, elevating them to stations in which their conduct was sure to produce the most pernicious influence.

The *Tribunate*, the last shadow of a representative government, was also abolished at this time; and the Imperial throne was surrounded by dukes, peers, barons, and princes, endowed with domains and principalities in conquered countries, or with revenues raised at the expense of vanquished nations. The plunder and extortion practised by the French in Prussia was frightful: of this the scanty examples furnished here must give sufficient evidence.

We copy, from the fourth volume of Professor Niemeyer's Travels, an account of the rapacity displayed by the French in the small town of Halle, a place without trade, manufactories, or resources of any kind, and depending entirely on its university, which was, besides, suspended by Napoleon's own order. "The sum," says the Professor, "which, immediately after the occupation, had to be given to French officers and authorities, amounted to 26,026 dollars. Of this sum, General Murat received 1124 dollars, the *Ordonnateur-en-Chef* 4000, two Commissioners 1600, Marshal Berthier, Prince of Neufchatel, almost the second man in the Empire after Napoleon, 11,000! General Menou 2000, his aide-de-camp 310, the *Intendant* 1000. Added to this, the following payments had to be made during the years 1806–1807:—Requisitions, 61,251 dollars; Table-money, 14,038; Hospitals, 27,409; Magazine supplies,

42,649. The sum total of expenses for the two years has been calculated at 205,717 dollars, including 19,500 crowns in gold."

Doctor Niemeyer, Professor of the University, and two other gentlemen, were arrested at three o'clock on the morning of the 18th May, 1807; torn from their afflicted and terrified families, and hurried to France, to be there detained as hostages: the order was dated from Napoleon's own head-quarters. The chieftain of hundreds of thousands, the so-styled patron of arts and letters, warring with a poor, feeble, and inoffensive German professor!

The city of Danzig, impoverished by the long siege it sustained, and the total loss of its commerce, was taxed at the enormous sum of 600,000 pounds sterling, and the kingdom of Westphalia, even before the annexation of Hanover, at a million: the sums regularly reserved for the Imperial revenue, the domains granted to officers, and the ordinary bribes and contributions not even included. Extortions so enormous and barefaced had never indeed been witnessed, since the days when the Roman Pro-Consuls plundered and oppressed the nations of Asia.

The British expedition to Copenhagen furnished the French and Russians with an early opportunity of throwing off the mask, and acting immediately on the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit. Both were preparing for deeds of robbery and aggression, the one against feeble and unoffending Portugal, the other against its very ally Sweden; and yet they both pretended to be greatly shocked by what was termed the barbarous conduct of England, and her unprincipled violation of all neutral rights. Austria was also induced to shut her ports against the English; and Napoleon,

seated on his throne of might, with the resources of the Continent at his command, had now full leisure to direct all his efforts against the British.

And how were these hated foes assailed? Did fleets and flotillas issue in swarms from every port and harbour between Bergen and Cadiz; and braving elements and foes, strive at last to land hostile myriads on the shores of Britain? Were the aids of science called in to devise and construct new and unheard-of castles of floating strength, to cover the passage of armies across the narrow seas that separate the yet unconquered from the conquerors of so many empires? Was any attempt made to close in gallant combat with enemies on whom falsehoods and invectives were constantly heaped with most reckless profusion? No; the leader of millions, the dreaded of nations, confined his efforts against England to issuing decrees against her cottons and sugars; by thundering in mighty wrath against cutlery and hardware, and dictating sentences of magniloquence against broad-cloths and calicoes! If posterity believe the tale, they must conclude that the power of the Continent was wielded by feeble and unskilful hands, or that its combined power was weak indeed, when compared to the single might of unsupported Britain.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POLICY OF TIBERIUS ON THE THRONE OF CHARLEMAGNE.

NAPOLEON'S inability to strike decisive blows at his most formidable adversaries, checked neither his progress of treachery nor violence. "The House of Braganza," he declared, "had ceased to reign;" a French army had occupied Portugal, and forced the Prince Regent to seek shelter in his Transatlantic possessions. Nor was the acquisition of one Pyrenean kingdom sufficient to satisfy the craving for dominion which such wonderful success had awakened. Spain, so long the ally of France, was now to be reduced to absolute vassalage, or to the rank of a tributary province. We learn from Bignon, that Napoleon already intended to strike a decisive blow at the Peninsula so early as the year 1805; but that the ready submission of the Spanish government then induced him to defer the project. It was now resumed; for not only was Napoleon all-powerful on the Continent, but events had shown that Spain was anxious to throw off the burden of French supremacy, and could not be altogether depended upon.

The French alliance had indeed pressed heavily on Spain; her provinces had been offered in barter for the benefit of strangers; her treasures were squandered, her coast was blockaded and her commerce destroyed, for

the support of a cause completely at variance with her best interests. Barcelona, Cadiz, Carthagena, Alicant, Corunna, and Ferrol, commercial cities, which had been rich and flourishing before the war and carried on an extensive trade, now saw their harbours deserted, and their wealthiest citizens sinking into poverty. Nor did the contest bring advantages that could help to check the progress of discontent; the war produced neither national honour nor individual benefit; "it was carried on," said the proud Castilian, "for the benefit of France, and the blood of Spaniards was shed in a foreign quarrel." To aggravate these hostile feelings came the terrible disaster of Trafalgar; the wrecks of a Spanish fleet, destroyed as the many thought by the treachery of France, strewed the sands of the Bay of Cadiz; and the swollen, mangled bodies of thousands of Spanish sailors, cast on shore by the waves, seemed to call aloud for vengeance on the false allies, the authors of these heavy calamities. Events gave no immediate opening for the explosion of the resentment thus gathered; but in the Spanish breast, revenge is not weakened by delay.

When, therefore, the French marched against Prussia, the cabinet of Madrid deemed the proper time come to throw off the dishonourable yoke which had so long pressed upon the country. A royal proclamation calling the people to arms had already been issued, when the news of the French victories of Jena and Auerstädt quickly arrested all farther efforts. This attempted shield-raising was not overlooked by Napoleon; and though no enemy was mentioned in the proclamation, he easily saw that it was aimed against himself, and therefore ordered the best Spanish troops to be sent to his assistance in Germany, and imposed other heavy obliga-

tions on the government. All were submitted to by the terrified cabinet of Madrid, but this was now too late ; and no sooner had the peace of Tilsit given him free hands than he resolved on some decisive measure respecting the Spanish monarchy.

Unfortunate dissensions in the royal family aided his projects. French armies entered the kingdom under frivolous pretences ; the principal fortresses were seized by treachery ; and when the Princes repaired to Bayonne on the invitation of an allied sovereign, they found themselves prisoners, obliged to purchase even life by the surrender of their splendid heritage.

Notwithstanding the manner in which it has been usual to write the history of Napoleon, and to estimate his conduct, the world in general have visited the treachery practised on the Spanish Princes with just and due severity. We are thus spared the painful task of entering into the proofs necessary to establish the true character of the transaction ; and may content ourselves with pointing out the only parallel which history furnishes to his conduct. Tacitus tells the tale, and informs us that the Emperor Tiberius, using promises and blandishments, enticed three Kings, the German Maroboduus, the Cappadocian Archelaus, and the Thracian Rhescuporis, into the Roman territory, and then deprived them of their dominions.

We have not sought to compare the French to the Roman Emperor ; the similarity of the means to which both resorted for the purpose of obtaining similar ends, forced it even on the unwilling attention of Bignon. Nor can any general comparison hold good between them : for Napoleon wanted the genius as well as the active and savage ferocity ascribed to Tiberius.

But though as inferior to the Roman in talents as superior to him in ordinary decency of behaviour, the butcher of the Turkish prisoners at Jaffa, the murderer of Enghien, Palm, and others of whom we have yet to speak, was as ruthless and unsparing as the recluse of Capreæ possibly could be.

Joseph Bonaparte now became King of Spain, and was succeeded on the throne of Naples by Murat, Grand-Duke of Berg, brother-in-law to the Emperor. Among the felicitations the new King of Spain received on this occasion, was a letter from his deposed predecessor Ferdinand VII., who solicited the honour of "his Most Catholic Majesty's friendship." "Of the many men of high station," says Bignon in recording the circumstance, "who have been humbled during our time, how few have fallen with dignity." If the remark is a just one, and we shall not question its accuracy, it must be admitted that, in descending from his "pride of place," Napoleon Bonaparte formed no exception to the rule.

The wild and sanguinary insurrection that overspread the Peninsula, and ultimately steeped its very soil with blood, led from the commencement to events that excited the liveliest interest from one extremity of Europe to the other. French troops who had defeated the best disciplined soldiers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, were foiled on various points by the unorganized peasantry of Spain; armies, at the very sight of which some of the strongest fortresses of Europe had surrendered without firing a single shot, were now repulsed from before unfortified towns, defended by untrained citizens. Nor was this all; a consular army—an army commanded by one of the most distinguished officers of France, was obliged to capitulate at Baylen in open

field, and ground arms before the hosts of undisciplined insurgents by whom it was beset. Even the escape of the Marquis de la Romana's army from the north of Germany produced a salutary effect: for though the small force of 10,000 men was nothing in itself when thrown into the scale against Napoleon, the moral influence of the transaction was considerable; as it seemed to indicate a turn of tide, and to prove that the French could find their superiors in sagacity and calculation.

The British government also, carried away by the spirit of the time and the boundless enthusiasm of the nation in favour of the Spanish insurgents, sent money, arms, and troops to the Peninsula. The armies at first were feeble and their efforts ill directed; but the liberation of Portugal—effected by the victories they achieved—gave a vast impulse to the cause; and, added to the success of the Spaniards, told the world that Napoleon was neither invincible nor infallible.

The French ruler, though evidently deceived in his expectation of finding Spain an easy prey, was not disposed to forego his criminal purpose because his first steps had experienced opposition. Servile senates and vassal sovereigns, working a ruthless and unsparing conscription, furnished the necessary thousands; and vast armies were soon in march towards the Pyrenees. But before proceeding farther in this new career of aggression, Napoleon deemed it right to draw closer the bonds that united him to Russia. He already repented the too liberal concessions made to the Czar at Tilsit, and was now anxious to prevent the dismemberment of Turkey, which Alexander as strenuously urged. Napoleon proposed a joint expedition against British India, the conquest and colonization of Northern

Africa; projects in which the Russian offered a ready concurrence indeed, but never without insisting on the terms of the treaty of Tilsit. An interview of the two Emperors was expected to remove these difficulties; and they met accordingly at Erfurt in September 1808.

As the city was in possession of the French, Napoleon did the honours; and from every part of Germany and Italy, vassal kings and princes hastened to augment the state of the modern Charlemagne.

It was then for the first time since the days of the Roman triumvirs, that kings were seen attending in ante-chambers; and it was the very first time that soldiers on guard were rebuked for having rendered too great military honours to a sovereign prince, on the plea that he "was *only* a king." Paris had lent all its sources of attraction to Erfurt; balls, dinners, operas, reviews, hunting-parties, and festivities of every description, followed each other in glittering succession. The extreme bad taste of the Imperial host failed not to be displayed on this brilliant occasion also; and among the entertainments given to Alexander was a visit to the battle-ground of Jena, where his Prussian allies had been defeated and their monarchy destroyed. Nor was this all; the Russian Emperor, almost accused by the world of having connived at the murder of his father, was treated to a representation of Voltaire's tragedy of the "Death of Cæsar," and had to listen to the following lines:—

> "*César, le regardant d'un œil tranquille et doux,*
> *Lui pardonnait encore en tombant par ses coups,*
> *Il l'appelait son fils, et ce nom cher et tendre*
> *Est le seul qu'en mourant César ait fait entendre:*
> *O mon fils! disait-il.*"

UN ROMAIN.

" O monstre que les Dieux
Devaient exterminer avant ce coup affreux !"

Whatever the Czar may have thought, he kept better countenance than the king in Hamlet, and displayed on a subsequent evening more tact than Napoleon had done : for the words—

" L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des Dieux,"

had scarcely been uttered in the performance of Voltaire's Œdipus, than he bowed with great courtesy to Napoleon, amid the loud plaudits of the whole audience.

A trivial incident, a few words uttered by Napoleon at one of the brilliant parties given during these conferences, must not be overlooked here, as it made some sensation at the time. The conversation happening to fall on the history of Germany, the Emperor specified with accuracy the date of the Golden Bull—the Magna Charta of Germany—which the Prince Primate had been unable to recollect. Compliments on his retentive memory and on what was termed his vast historical knowledge, followed of course ; and it was in answer to these that he made the speech so often lauded and repeated. " When I was," he began, " sub-lieutenant of artillery,"—these words, this confession of humble origin from the man whose " feet on sceptres and tiaras trod," and who in point of power was the mightiest of his time, occasioned, it seems, universal surprise and admiration. Observing the sensation his speech had produced, he looked round with a smile, and then resumed,—" When I was sub-lieutenant of artillery, and stationed at Grenoble, I lodged next door to a bookseller, and read his whole library through more than once ;

and as I have a good memory for dates, there is nothing very singular in my recollecting the one of which we have been speaking." There was, at all events, nothing very singular, or deserving of praise, in avowing that he had been lieutenant of artillery. Every person present knew the fact perfectly well; and his rise, had he made a worthy use of the power acquired, would have redounded to his honour rather than otherwise.

But if on this occasion Napoleon frankly avowed himself to have risen from humble rank, and placed himself thus above the ordinary *parvenus;* he sank in another respect so far below the usual level of that very little character, that with the exception of Capefigue, not a single one of his many historians has ventured to record the humiliating descent. As the host, Napoleon alone gave entertainments, and at the Imperial table the two Emperors only had *arm*-chairs; ordinary kings were obliged to be satisfied with ordinary chairs; while princes and nobles were forced to content themselves with *tabourets*, seats without backs or arms! The total absence of tact, taste, and good breeding, evinced in this conduct towards invited guests, would almost lead to the belief that they had been assembled for the purpose of being completely humbled, exposed in all their feebleness, instead of being treated with friendly hospitality: for studied insult could hardly have been rendered more offensive.

Among the persons presented to Napoleon during the conferences at Erfurt, were the German poets Goethe and Wieland: the latter, already on the verge of second childhood, had himself solicited the honour of being introduced to the oppressor of his country, and has left us a brief account of his conversation with the Emperor. After some common-places about the Greeks and Romans, ancient and modern literature, in which Napoleon gave

the preference to Ossian over Homer, and treated the poetry of Ariosto with contempt, "not knowing, I suppose," continues the author of Oberon, "that he dealt me a slap in the face," the discourse, which we give in Wieland's own words, then turned upon religion. "The Emperor had spoken in so friendly a manner, that I ventured to ask, why the public worship he had re-established in France was not of a more philosophical cast, and more in harmony with the spirit of the age? 'Religion, my dear Wieland,' was his reply, 'is not made for philosophers, who believe neither in me nor in my priests; and as to the persons who *do* believe, I cannot let them have too many marvels. Were I to found a religion for philosophers, it would be completely opposed to the one I have given the credulous multitude.' The conversation continued in this tone for some time longer, and Napoleon carried scepticism so far, as to doubt whether Jesus Christ had ever existed. Scepticism is now so general, that I found nothing extraordinary in this, except the frankness with which it was avowed." Wieland received the star of the Legion of Honour, and its dazzling beams probably prevented the aged Epicurean from perceiving the folly and gross impropriety of such an avowal, when made in a public ball-room, by the sovereign of a Christian Empire. The conversation lasted an hour, and completely exhausted Wieland, who was obliged to solicit permission to retire. It offered a proof, also, of the Emperor's indifferent tact and bad manners: he was a guest at a ball given in his honour by the Princess of Weimar, and, from the mere affectation of entertaining a man of letters, confined his attention to one individual for a whole hour.

The German poet farther tells us, that it often struck him during the conversation, that Napoleon, "though very friendly in his manner, appeared to be of bronze."

The same remark has been frequently made, and always, we believe, for the purpose of exciting the reader's admiration in favour of what has been described as the "striking," "highly intellectual," almost "monumental," appearance of the French Emperor. How the matter may really have stood, we have no means of knowing, for Wieland had ceased to be authority on any point long before the period of these conferences; but men of ordinary observation must frequently have noticed this "bronze," or metallic appearance of countenance in the world: and we think we are not hazarding much when we say, that it was never seen in conjunction with genius, or a high order of talent; conveying, on the contrary, the impression of a very inferior degree of intellect. Genius and talent are always marked, we suspect, by great calmness of features, whether stern or placid; but bearing proof at the same time of extreme flexibility, totally incompatible with that metallic rigidity of feature here mentioned.

The political differences which had led to these brilliant conferences were so far adjusted, that the sovereigns parted at least in apparent amity. Influenced by a low spirit of aggrandizement, both had acted dishonourable parts; and both, the legitimate sovereign and military adventurer, were fully rivalled in mean rapacity by the popularly-elected President of America. The ruling demagogues of the Republic, eager to purchase a continuance of power by gratifying the vulgar ambition of the multitudes from whom their authority was derived, requested Napoleon's permission to seize the Floridas, and rob unoffending Spain of these valuable colonies. To obtain this permission, they offered to join the oppressor of nations against Britain, the only great country which, during the long struggle in the cause of popular

rights, acted a great and consistent part from first to last. Napoleon did not, it seems, deem the American assistance worth purchasing by the slight sacrifice required, and reprimanded the Republicans in sharp terms for the proposal: the reprimand might be deserved, but came with an indifferent grace from the Tiberius of the Bayonne drama.

Secure on the side of Russia, the French Emperor now directed all his efforts against Spain. The Peninsular governments, composed of men of little ability, and strangers to the conduct of public affairs, had turned the respite gained by their first success to very slight advantage, and were totally unprepared to meet the storm that now burst upon the unhappy kingdoms.

At the head of his war-trained bands, Napoleon overthrew the unorganized Spanish multitudes on every point; and advancing by rapid strides to Madrid, obliged the capital to surrender after a mere show of resistance. The victorious host, 80,000 strong, were then directed against the British; who, to the number of 25,000 men, were moving to the aid of their unhappy allies. Sir John Moore, the English commander, seeing himself left alone in the arena, opposed to such an overwhelming superiority, retired towards Corunna, closely followed by the French.

Napoleon himself did not, however, continue to lead the pursuit. Having, it is said, received tidings of the Austrian armaments, he halted at Astorga, and then returned with his guards to Valladolid: and it is a singular and unexplained circumstance, that so decided an enemy of England should have willingly resigned the prospect of closing upon one of her armies, with the vast superiority of force which he then commanded. That time was not exactly wanting, is proved by his ten days' stay

at Valladolid. Whether his abrupt departure from the army at such a moment was occasioned by any of those vague and shadowy forebodings, which often flit across the minds even of the brave, influence the timid, and for moments dispel the delusions that dazzle and inflate the vain—giving them passing but profitless gleams of their feebleness when contrasted with their pretensions ; whether it arose from accident, or from a conviction that in the British he would meet with adversaries more formidable than any he had yet encountered, and from whom, after all his vauntings, defeat would be doubly humiliating—are questions it is now impossible to decide, though the circumstance is certainly a curious one. He knew that the defeat of a British army, however small and by whatever odds effected—that the humblest trophies torn from them in fair fight, would be more gratifying to the people of France and Paris, than ten victories achieved over hundreds of thousands of other troops. He was already aware that the seizure of the Spanish crown, which threatened to be attended with many difficulties, began to be disapproved of in France ; the legislative body had also, as we shall see, given signs of some refractory disposition which had greatly displeased him ; and he well knew, that if he returned to Paris as the conqueror of the British, everything would be forgiven, and that he would be more than ever the idol of the nation. All this was evident, and yet he dared not strike a blow for the mighty advantage held out.

The Emperor's hasty return to Paris, though ascribed by many to the armaments of Austria, was also, in some measure, occasioned by a faint semblance of opposition evinced in the Legislative Assembly ; the mere shadow of public freedom appearing like a hideous spectre to the

eyes of Napoleon. The Legislative Assembly were sharply rebuked in the columns of the *Moniteur*, for presuming to fancy themselves the representatives of the nation; the dignity of that representation being solely reserved for the sovereign himself.

Nor were the members of this body the only offenders on whom Napoleon vented his displeasure. Of all the enterprises and acts of aggression which had distinguished his reign, the seizure of the Spanish crown was the one least popular at Paris. Public opinion could not indeed be expressed; but the *salons*, which still exercised some influence in the capital, and which Napoleon was weak enough to hate with the most foolish virulence, had given signs of disapprobation, and these had excited his marked displeasure. Two men also, Talleyrand and Fouché, who differed in every respect so widely from each other, agreed in pretended hostility to the Spanish war. Some sayings to that effect were ascribed to Talleyrand; graver indiscretions, of which, as Bignon tells us, he was very capable, were attributed to Fouché; and the approximation, on this point, of two persons who were complete opposites, not only gave umbrage, but awaked dark suspicions in the mind of the sovereign. We have seen this stated in a more tangible manner, and on such high authority, that we deem ourselves bound to repeat the tale, strange as it may appear. According to this statement, "Napoleon's sudden and hasty departure from Astorga must be attributed to information which reached him that '*ces deux agneaux*,' Fouché and Talleyrand, had laid their heads together, for the purpose of placing Murat on the throne; on the assumption, which on some reason they thought a probable one, that Napoleon would not return alive from the Peninsula. Fouché and Talleyrand had been long

on terms of bitter and notorious hostility. An interview had, however, been arranged at a ball, given by the former at the hôtel, since Crawford, and it had been remarked, that they were closeted for an hour. Lavalette was the observer and reporter of this incident. About the same time, Eugene Beauharnais intercepted a cipher letter, which, being deciphered, confirmed and elucidated Lavalette's suspicions."

However the case may be, certain it is that Napoleon's displeasure was strongly excited. A few days after his return to Paris, he called Cambacéres, Lebrun, Talleyrand, Fouché, and Décres, the minister of marine, into his presence. Having made some general remarks on the conduct and duties of all high functionaries of state, and on the guarded style of language which office imposes upon them, he turned to the two special offenders, and addressed them as follows :—" To whom do you owe your honours and fortunes but to me? How can you preserve them but by my aid? Look back, examine your past lives : and yet you are forming plots. You must be as ungrateful as senseless, to suppose that there is any one but myself strong enough to support you. Should a new revolution occur, it would be sure to crush you, whatever part you might adopt." Ending with a threat to make a striking example of "factious intriguers," he dismissed them without explaining the nature of the punishment he intended to inflict. It was not severe : Fouché remained minister, and Talleyrand grand dignitary, being only deprived of his Chamberlain's key. According to Bignon, this was too little or too much. It seems, however, to have suited the state of society existing at the Imperial court; and which must necessarily have been of a very low tone, when dignitaries of state remained in the service of a sovereign who addressed them in such language. Napoleon

complained, in after years, that he was betrayed by both these persons. If so, the fault was his own; for it is very certain, that men who submitted to such treatment could be deserving of little trust,—no one possessing the slightest insight into character would have reposed faith in them. We may further add here, that there is not the slightest foundation for the tale which gives Talleyrand credit for having counselled Napoleon against the usurpation of the Spanish crown. Bignon tells us, on the very authority of Champagny, the minister of foreign affairs, that not the least objection was urged against the measure when fully discussed at a council held immediately before the Emperor's departure for Bayonne, and at which Talleyrand was present. It were worse than idle, indeed, to look for the slightest sense of political morality from the disciples of the Revolution, and the ministers of Napoleon.

Always overbearing in his conduct towards neutral states, Napoleon had hardly, since the fall of Prussia, treated Austria as an independent power. During the war in Prussia and Poland, Mr Adair, the English Ambassador at Vienna, a leading member of the Whig party, had strongly urged the Austrians to join the Russians and Prussians; on the ground, fully admitted by the Imperial cabinet, that a war for the independence of the monarchy was sooner or later unavoidable. But the Austrian government, though sensible of their unfortunate position, feared to depend on the continued efforts of the Allies, and deemed themselves too feeble, after so many losses, to turn the balance against France; and thus allowed the best opportunity to pass, even as Prussia had allowed it to pass during the campaign of Austerlitz. The consequence was, that with augmented

power, the conduct of France became so overbearing, that war would already have taken place in 1808, had not the unexpected resistance of the Spaniards called Napoleon's attention towards the Peninsula. But this very circumstance encouraged the cabinet of Vienna. The rising in Spain had cast a vivid ray of light over Europe ; the spell of French invincibility had been broken at Baylen and Vimeira ; oppressed nations began to cherish almost forgotten hopes ; the spirit of Germany awoke from the stunning effects of adversity, and Austria, taking the lead in the patriot cause, marshalled all the remaining resources of her gallant people to strike one more blow for her own and the world's freedom.

The most numerous and best-equipped German army which had ever taken the field was assembled, and placed under the orders of the Arch-Duke Charles,—a prince distinguished by his early victories, and possessing in the highest degree the love and confidence of the troops. Like Wallenstein, the saviour of the Austrian monarchy in the seventeenth century, the new generalissimo was intrusted with absolute power, and relieved from the baneful control of the Aulic Council. And if talents and heroism deserved to be intrusted with such absolute authority, it could not have been more worthily bestowed than on his Imperial Highness ; for none doubted his abilities, and his personal heroism was conspicuously displayed in every action in which he commanded. But there were drawbacks to such high qualities ; and they were, unfortunately, of such a character as to render the best totally unavailing. Personally the bravest of the brave, his Imperial Highness was altogether destitute of that mental courage, which can alone give effect to the genius of a commander, and to

the bravery of the troops. This was known before the breaking out of the war; for men of observation had perceived it, even during the prince's early campaigns: but the love entertained for him by the soldiers, his high station, and the hopes that the enthusiasm of the army and the nation would extend even to its chief, and give him that confidence in himself and his followers so essential to victory, placed him in a situation which, as the wise foretold and the result proved, he was unable to fill.

Our limits unfortunately prevent us from exposing the many extravagant accounts of this brief war which have found their way into history. From the very first, the French were greatly superior in numbers, and struck home with the confidence resulting from so many victories. The Austrians, on the other hand, though they fought on all points with distinguished bravery, acted a feeble and undecided part; and without returning a single *riposta*, strove only to parry the blows aimed at them: and in such a contest, the most unskilful fencer will ultimately overcome even a master; while it is not certain that the French army had any absolute master to contend with. They gained brilliant advantages, and following these with great rapidity, were soon in possession of the Austrian capital.

There is reason to believe that these dazzling victories suggested to Napoleon some plan of more than ordinary extravagance, and that he actually contemplated for a time the total dismemberment of the Austrian monarchy. Count Hormayr,* whose word cannot be doubted,

* Taschenbuch für die Vaterländische Geschichte. Von J. Freiherrn von Hormayr. Leipzig, 1842.

informs us that he detained, as prisoners of war, all bearers of flags of truce, and refused to answer the letters which they brought, declaring that "there was no longer an Emperor of Austria; there were only Princes of the House of Loraine, Grand Feudatories of the Crown of France!" The loss of the battle of Aspern checked these wild fancies, and not only arrested his conquests for a time, but placed him in a position of considerable danger.

The defeated army was for two days cooped up in the Isle of Lobau, without provisions, medicines, or medical attendants: and frightful to relate, numbers of the wounded, those whose cases were deemed hopeless, were, while yet living men, thrown into the Danube. Capefigue states the fact on the highest authority: thus showing that the principle which suggested the poisoning of the sick at Jaffa, still held full sway in the mind of him who devised the ruthless and inhuman project. Napoleon's resources were so vastly superior to those of Austria, that little hope of success could be entertained from her unsupported exertions; and no foreign power came to her aid. Prussia, completely broken by the war of 1806, remained neutral; and Russia, aiding the oppressor of nations, sent an army into Galicia. These troops took, indeed, little part in the war; but they obliged the Austrians to detach a corresponding force to meet the new adversaries. In the Tyrol, a fierce insurrection had broken out against the French; and in the north of Germany, Schill, Dörnberg, and others, raised the standard of independence. But the early victories of Napoleon discouraged the German patriots: Schill, left unsupported, was defeated and slain, after performing some very brilliant actions; and the followers of Dörnberg, hearing only evil tidings, dispersed of themselves.

In their mountain holds, the Tyrolese made a longer and braver stand, for which their gallant leader, Andreas Hoffer, ultimately suffered death. Betrayed after the peace, he was tried and executed at Mantua. The officers who had fought under Schill shared the same fate. Tried and condemned by a military commission, they were shot at Wessel, by order of the man who, at this very time, was instigating the Hungarians to revolt, to meet in the fields of Ronco, renounce their allegiance to the Emperor Francis, and elect another sovereign.

His unprincipled arrogance seems at this time to have been absolutely boundless. General Chasteler, the commander of the Austrian troops in the Tyrol, was outlawed, as Count von Stein had been, and ordered, if taken, to be brought before a military commission and shot. And when General Weissenvolf was sent to acquaint him that Generals Durosnel, Fouler, and Sorbier, then prisoners of war, would be held responsible for the Austrian officer, he sprung from his seat, exclaiming with vulgar fury, "If you but scratch a single one of them, I will order ten thousand men to be shot, and cause six princesses and twenty ladies of rank to be violated by the drummers of the army."* And yet there are writers who would represent this man as calm and dignified!

England sent as usual no aid to Germany. General Stewart, the English commander in Sicily, declared, when applied to, that he could lend no assistance, till the Austrian standards should be displayed from the towers of Venice and Milan. And before an English expedition was ready to leave the shores of Britain, Napoleon had recovered from the stunning effects of the

* Hormayr, Taschenbuch, &c.

defeat of Aspern, and achieved the closing victory of Wagram.

This sanguinary battle, which terminated the war of 1809, and overshadowed Europe with almost hopeless gloom, was fought on the 6th July between 180,000 French on one side, and 137,000 Austrians on the other, the most numerous masses of Christian men that ever before contended in one field of strife. The Austrians, though vanquished, retired in perfect order, and carried with them the only trophies gained in the action. Their spirits were unbroken; and from the gallant conduct of the troops, all anticipated certain success in another battle, which was universally expected to follow.

But the Commander-in-chief did not share in these sanguine hopes; and he who, in general opinion, had shown himself destitute of mental courage after the decisive victory of Aspern, so fatal to the French, could hardly feel very confident after the reverse of Wagram. Two opportunities for striking severe blows at the pursuing enemy were neglected; and when events brought about an action near Znaym, in Moravia, his Imperial Highness, in the midst of an undecided combat, sent to solicit an armistice, the terms of which brought the monarchy to the very brink of ruin.

It remained for this unhappy prince, on whose genius and valour so many bright hopes had once been founded, to display a still greater want of firmness and moral courage; for, in the very crisis of fate, and while peace or war still hung suspended in the scale of destiny, he resigned the command of the army; and thus dispelled, at a single blow, every particle of that military enthusiasm, which animated the troops, and formed the only support of the sinking fortunes of his country. All parties united in praise of the heroism displayed by the

prince during the unfortunate campaign. At Aspern, his Imperial Highness seized the standard of the regiment of Zach, and led the soldiers personally to the charge: though wounded in the first day's action at Wagram, he never left the field for an instant, and was so much exposed, so forward in the fray, that Captain Weitenfeld, of the regiment of Vogelsang, actually cut down a French soldier who was in the very act of levelling a musket at him; and later still, a French officer was slain in the attempt to take him prisoner, and while calling out to him to surrender. But all this personal courage in battle could not retrieve the want of moral courage and confidence, the want of which reduced a great, powerful, and time-honoured monarchy to the rank of a second-rate power, and made Prince John of Lichtenstein, the Austrian plenipotentiary, and the constant advocate of Napoleon in the Austrian cabinet, burst into tears when forced to sign the unfortunate treaty of Vienna.

Germany had in vain looked to England for assistance during the great, and, as it was then deemed, the final struggle of 1809. In the Peninsula, British armies had been successful; had again liberated Portugal, and gained the battle of Talavera; but no British troops had appeared on the decisive field of contest. And the battle of Wagram had been lost, before a British force left the ports of Britain. A few weeks sooner, and the splendid army which, under Lord Chatham, landed on the pestilential shores of Walcheren and Bevcland, would, if dispatched to the north of Germany, have rallied myriads round the standard of national independence; but landed in Zealand to effect a purely British object,—the capture of the Antwerp fleet,—they could have contributed little or nothing to the good of the

general cause, had they been as successful as they were disastrously the reverse.

Austria sustained heavy losses by this short and ruinous war. Every thing deemed public property was confiscated, sold, or carried away: the extortions practised by French functionaries and private individuals were enormous; and on many lines of march, the villages and hamlets were burnt to the ground, and the inhabitants cruelly oppressed. The Tyrol was, as Count Seebach expressed it, "inundated by a sea of flame." And in all countries subject to the influence of France, the dominions of the Teutonic knights were confiscated for the benefit of the French army and the allies of Napoleon.

While the peace of Vienna was negotiating, an event happened at Schönbrun, which, as Bignon tells us, made a deep impression on the Emperor, and led to the immediate signature of the treaty. Napoleon was reviewing his troops in the palace court on the morning of the 13th October, when a young man was observed trying to force his way through the crowd of staff officers, who always surrounded the sovereign. General Rapp, in trying to thrust him back, felt a weapon, which betrayed the assassin, concealed beneath his coat, and immediately caused him to be arrested. This political fanatic, whose name was Stapz, was only nineteen years of age, and was the son of a Protestant clergyman of Erfurt. When Napoleon returned to the palace, he interrogated the prisoner, who frankly avowed his intention. After various questions, to which he replied with perfect calmness, the Emperor demanded why he wished to assassinate him? "Because there will be no peace in Germany as long as you live," said the young man. "Do you believe that heaven sanctifies murder?" inquired Napoleon,

"I have my doubts," replied the other: "but I expected forgiveness in consequence of the service I should have rendered my country."—"If I were to forgive you," continued the Emperor, "what would you do?"—"I would still slay you," was the answer.

The wretched enthusiast was sent before a military commission, condemned to death, and shot accordingly; and though no one will doubt the justice of the sentence, Napoleon's conduct, in allowing it to be executed, contrasts but indifferently with the noble behaviour of Leopold I. on a similar occasion. While hunting near Schönbrun, that prince was fired at by an assassin, who, on being seized and brought before the sovereign, also acknowledged his guilt. "Give the starving wretch a hundred ducats," said Leopold, with the haughty Spanish air for which he was distinguished; "and let him run for his life, and cross the frontier before the police overtake him." This was princely and imperial conduct; but not that of Napoleon. His idolaters tell us, indeed, that it was only the resolution expressed by the young fanatic, to persevere in his murderous attempt, which prevented the Emperor, who to the last inclined to mercy, from pardoning him. Wretched puerilities, fit only to impose on the credulous and incapable: for had one spark of generous humanity existed in his breast, had a single fibre of his callous heart recoiled from the needless shedding of blood, nothing could have prevented this unhappy maniac from being consigned to a lunatic asylum in France: and history, which lays the blood of millions on the head of Napoleon, would be able to give him credit for at least one act of clemency. Hatfield, who in a fit of insanity fired a pistol at George III., was confined in Bedlam, and lived many years afterwards to pray for the welfare of the generous monarch who had

pardoned the maniac crime ; but death was the only remedy that presented itself to Napoleon.

Though there is nothing altogether improbable in the manner in which Stapz is said to have been arrested, it is more likely that he was traced to the spot by the French police, and seized in time to show their zeal and avert misfortune. Bignon tells us that a letter, written by the unhappy young man to his parents at the moment of his leaving Erfurt for the avowed purpose of executing the murderous design, had fallen into the hands of the French authorities ; and it is certain that they would not fail to pursue the intended criminal. The historian on this occasion makes rather a curious confession : " All Germany," he says, " ought to have suspected that there existed an office first at Berlin and then at Erfurt, *for unsealing letters ;* and yet it seemed to strike no one : for this secret inquisition every day brought to light the most curious avowals and indiscretions which were constantly discovered in private letters, and communicated by extracts to the Emperor." The world are not very virtuous ; but it is not easy to see why the people of Germany ought naturally to have suspected that such baseness was actually reduced to system ; least of all by those who pretended to be the regenerators of nations. It is even now fortunate that we find honest and upright men still so far blinded by the very arts they long assisted to practise, as unconsciously to lift the veil that concealed the whole machinery of infamy, and display its working in the full face of day.

The Emperor of Austria was not the only prince who, during the memorable year 1809, suffered from the power and arrogance of Napoleon ; for the defenceless Pope was still more harshly treated. Claiming, as

successor of Charlemagne, a right of superiority over Rome, the French Emperor called upon the Sovereign Pontiff to join the war against England, or forfeit his temporal power. Pius VII. refused compliance, and his noble and dignified answer deserves to be recorded. "I shall make no resistance," he said; "I am ready to retire into a convent, or into the same catacombs of Rome that afforded shelter to the first successors of St Peter. Europe will see how I am treated, and I shall prove that I have acted according to my honour and my conscience. If I am deprived of life, the tomb will honour me, and I shall be justified in the eyes of God and in the memory of men."

An Imperial decree, which annexed Rome and all the remaining states of the Church to the Grand Empire, was the immediate consequence of this display of courage. A bull, excommunicating the French Emperor, had been prepared in anticipation of the event, and it was now to be issued: the most powerful sovereign who had ever held sway in Europe since the time of Charlemagne, was to be denounced to the Catholic world, and excluded from the fellowship of the Church. It was a dangerous measure, and Pius hesitated for an instant. "What would your Eminence do?" he said to Cardinal Pacca, Secretary of State. "The question is difficult to answer," replied the latter; "but let your Holiness raise your eyes to heaven, and give me your orders, and they shall be executed." The Pope folding his hands on his breast, and raising his eyes to heaven, paused for a moment, and then saying, "Let duty be done, come what may," issued the decree accordingly.

But the spiritual arms of the Church were powerless against the might of Napoleon, who, irritated by this opposition to his will, caused the Pontiff to be arrested

and conducted a prisoner to Savona, and from thence to Fontainbleau. The aged Prince remained four years a captive, when the events of the Leipzig campaign again restored him to liberty.

On his return from the Austrian war, Napoleon divorced the Empress Josephine; not only in hopes of having children of his own, to whom he could bequeath his vast dominions, but also with a view of gratifying his vanity, by forming an alliance with some of the ancient royal families of Europe. He first applied for the hand of the Grand-Duchess Ann, sister of the Emperor Alexander, but experienced a refusal which seems deeply to have mortified him. The negotiation, which displays the littleness of his character in a most conspicuous light, was however kept a secret till he had been accepted by the Arch-Duchess Maria Louisa; when he suddenly appeared before the dazzled and astonished world as the betrothed suitor of an Austrian princess, daughter of the Emperor Francis, the head of the noblest and most ancient reigning family in Europe. The parties having been first married by proxy at Vienna, were again married at Paris on the 2d of April 1810.

Notwithstanding the melancholy accident which happened at the magnificent ball given by Prince Schwarzenberg in celebration of the event, when Napoleon was weak enough to show some apprehension of treason,—and which, as it seemed an evil omen, brought the great calamity that occurred at the marriage of Marie Antoinette and the last of the Bourbon kings to recollection,—it cannot be denied that this splendid alliance might have proved of vast benefit to the "heir of the Revolution." It was considered a public reception of the new empire within the bosom of the European family; a reconciliation of the new with the old dynas-

tics ; and a pledge of concord and good will between nations ; and might have fixed the Imperial throne on a rock of granite, had the possessor's conduct been guided by ordinary judgment or moderation.

The reverse, however, was the case : Napoleon could only accept and abuse, but not adorn and improve the bounteous gifts of fortune ; nor did any acts of generous forbearance or princely benevolence ever mark his advance to power and greatness ; war and desolation alone tracked his progress. Vast armies, rendered disposable by the peace of Vienna, poured into the Pyrenean Peninsula : and in his address to the Senate, the Emperor foretold, in oracular and inflated style, the approaching humiliation of Britain. " England, Ireland, and Scotland," he said, " are destitute of troops. English blood has been shed in combats glorious to the French arms ; and this struggle against Carthage, which seemed destined to be decided on the ocean, or beyond its waves, will now be decided in the fields of Spain. And when England shall be exhausted, when she shall at last have experienced the sufferings she has for the last twenty years inflicted, with so much cruelty, on the continent ; when half her families shall be clad in mourning, then will a thunder-burst end the Peninsular contest, seal the fate of her armies, and avenge Europe and Asia by terminating this second Punic war."

Crowned with the still verdant laurels of Wagram, Massena invaded Portugal at the head of a large force, which was to " drive into the sea the feeble battalions of England :" but which, foiled by those very battalions, marked its retreat by deeds of horror so dark, frightful, and atrocious, as almost to make those who witnessed them doubt the divine truth which commands us to

believe that man was made in the image of his benignant and all-merciful Creator.

The battles of Fontes d'Honore, Barossa, and Albuera, secured the liberation of Portugal; but Spain was less fortunate. Her best troops were defeated, her yet remaining strongholds captured; invading hosts penetrated into every part of the kingdom, till French eagles were planted round the Bay of Cadiz, and the empire of Charles V. and Philip II. confined to the narrow limits of the Isle of Leon.

But though French armies gathered thickly on the Spanish soil, they were in truth masters of little more than the ground within reach of their arms. The population remained as hostile as ever; were rendered more so, perhaps, by the cruelties the invaders committed. Wherever openings were left, forces collected, and guerilla bands assembled: and from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Bay of Biscay, and from the Pyrenees to the Pillars of Hercules, a fierce predatory war was carried on against the French. The system of requisition, by which the invaders were supported, greatly facilitated the operations of the *partidas*, who assailed the detached bands sent out to collect supplies: but though great losses were thus inflicted on the invaders, the mode of war proved necessarily very ruinous to the country; every glen, village, hamlet, hill, or dale, became a scene of combat to exasperated adversaries. The French marauding parties, kept constantly in a state of alarm and hostility, showing rarely to others the mercy they but rarely experienced, too often avenged on the peaceful inhabitants the losses they sustained from the guerillas, and marked their progress by every species of brutal excess.

This arduous struggle, which exercised such vast influence on the destinies of Europe, and which reflects so much honour on the Spanish nation, is yet marked by a strange characteristic: it did not, during its long and sanguinary course, bring forward a single individual distinguished for greatness, either as a soldier or statesman. No Robert Bruce, no Gustavus Vasa, arose in Spain: whatever was effected, was effected by the patriotism and constancy of the masses; and though the people displayed great heroism during this terrible contest, it must still be recollected, that they lost their country from the Pyrenees to the Pillars of Hercules, and left its reconquest to the trained soldiers of England and Portugal.

Nor was the exertion of ruthless power confined to the Peninsula; the very kingdoms governed by Napoleon's brothers felt its iron pressure. In placing members of his family on foreign thrones, the Emperor commanded them to rule the countries intrusted to them for the interest of France: and as the crowned Proconsuls sometimes strove with honest zeal to lessen the burthens of their oppressed subjects, they drew down upon themselves the heavy displeasure of their haughty lord-superior. Louis, King of Holland, descended from his throne and fled the country; Murat of Naples, told that his kingdom was only a dependency of France, threatened to abdicate the semblance of royalty; and Joseph, the intrusive King of Spain, frequently expressed the same intention. Bernadotte, placed by an accidental intrigue on the steps of the throne of Sweden, was insulted and called upon to submit to the dictates of France. Distance and intervening seas secured the Crown Prince from the displeasure of his former sovereign, and enabled him to give full scope to his ludicrous and inordinate

vanity: for he was weak enough to speak of himself "as an oppressed hero, forced to seek shelter on a foreign throne, from the persecutions of an envious rival and jealous tyrant." Bernadotte was a man of distinguished spirit, and one of the best, perhaps, of the class to which he belonged; but how little, how very little, was the best of the French revolutionary chiefs when placed on the throne of the Vasas—a throne round which Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. had cast so bright and unfading a lustre!

Such was the boundless rapacity of Napoleon, and the vast force he possessed when at the zenith of power, that, by a simple decree of the 16th June 1811, he annexed no less than sixteen new departments, composed of the kingdom of Holland, the States of the Church, the Duchies of Oldenburg, Lauenburg, and the German Hanse Towns, to the empire. This last act of aggression furnished not only an additional proof of the unprincipled ambition which marked his government; but brought to light a transaction strangely illustrative of the spirit of venality which his influence had so widely diffused. The German Hanse Towns had given large sums to peers, princes, and marshals of France, to avoid being annexed to the empire; but when they found that their efforts to escape the dangerous honour were unavailing—when they saw themselves incorporated with France—they applied to Napoleon for permission to deduct these large sums from the heavy contributions imposed upon them; sending, at the same time, a list of the individuals to whom the money had been paid. "The Emperor," Bignon tells us, "was indignant, and threatened to have the offenders publicly prosecuted; but nothing was done in the matter, as it appeared that the military had, on this occasion, obtained the least

share of the booty, and that one of the accused parties already stood on the footsteps of a foreign throne."

The real value of the imperial indignation may be best judged of, perhaps, by another statement, in which the same author, the ablest and best informed of Napoleon's enthusiastic admirers, tells us, that the Emperor appointed a general officer to command, with the observation, "that he knew him to be addicted to plundering; but that he was, nevertheless, well fitted for the situation!"

Let us now, in concluding this brief introduction, ask to what noble purpose Napoleon employed the vast power he had acquired, and already exercised, during twelve years of consular and imperial absolutism? How had his gratitude been shown, and what were the benefits he had conferred on mankind in return for the boundless favours lavished upon him by fortune? He had enslaved his country, and sown hatred among nations; and the fruits of his reign had produced a harvest of blood and tears such as the civilized world had never reaped before. In France, and in the tributary states, the sword of despotism maintained the stillness of the cemetery; and the sanguinary conscription hovering, vampire-like, over the land, carried fear and apprehension to the heart of every family in the empire. All vestiges of freedom had been swept from the soil; not a thought could be published, not a word spoken, at variance with the views of the iron-sceptred ruler; and long before the period of which we are now writing, nine state prisons, already filled with captives confined for political offences, had been erected to replace one *Bastille* destroyed in the name of Liberty, by the phrensy of the Revolution. Th ruthless hand of war was laying waste the fields of Spain and Portugal; seas of flame had inundated the once

peaceful valleys of the Tyrol; and war and battle-cry had resounded along the banks of the Adige, and on the shores of the Bay of Naples. All Germany groaned beneath the hand of oppression, and mourned over a hundred fields of slaughter, strewn with the corpses of her sons who had fallen in the vain attempts to arrest the inroads of foreign spoilers and aggressors. The Tagus and the Ebro had been reddened by the fires that laid towns, villages, and hamlets in ashes; and the banks of the Elbe, the Danube and the Oder, had witnessed deeds of wrath, cruelty, and sacrilege, exceeding those committed during the most savage periods of the Thirty Years' War. The unprincipled compact of Tilsit had caused the capital of a brave and time-honoured people to be assailed by victors who grieved over the victory that self-preservation forced them to achieve. The same compact had lighted the flames of war in Finland, and consigned the often-ravaged fields of Moldavia and Wallachia to renewed devastation.

Beyond the seas, also, the fatal spirit of Napoleon had spread discord. The American colonies, seeing Spain occupied by foreign troops, an unknown sovereign on the throne from which the princes of their ancient line of kings had been removed by force and fraud, declared themselves independent; and possessing none of the elements necessary to the formation of strong and beneficial governments, rushed at once into extremes of anarchy, that a quarter of a century has not yet been able to allay. Nor did the States of North America escape the poisonous influence of the time. Instigated by Napoleon, and by the spirit of aggression which has distinguished all republics—from the petty republican tyrannies of Greece, to the wide-spread rule of blood-stained and all-enslaving Rome—they joined the cause

of despotism, and took arms against England, at the very time when they thought the land of their fathers was sinking beneath the blows of France. Anxious to share in the spoils of the vanquished, the boasted sons of freedom lent their aid to the cause of oppression; and forgetful of the vast obligations they owed to the mother country—an obligation which their flourishing condition, compared with the wretchedness of the liberated colonies of Spain, renders sufficiently evident—they joined the standard of Napoleon, bartered, slave-like, for leave to seize the provinces of unoffending Spain, and stretched out the hand of rapacity to grasp the Canadian possessions of England, then almost denuded of troops; and the war which Napoleon's ambition had kindled in Europe, now extended its ravages to the very banks of the Plata, the Oronoco, and the St Lawrence.

The intercourse between different countries, resulting from civilisation, and necessary perhaps to its very existence, was interrupted. The sea which surrounds continental Europe, the very high-road of nations, had become a magic circle impassable to all who bowed beneath the yoke of Napoleon; and lands that lay beyond its waves no longer poured their treasures, their sources of wealth, health, and elegance, into the lap of the old and isolated world. Trade and commerce were nearly dead, and dismantled and decaying ships filled the harbours over which the tricolor flag was displayed. Industry naturally declined where war with its enormous demands consumed the produce of peaceful labour, and alone led to preferment and distinction. Even learning and knowledge were fading away where arms only were honoured; and the very virtues most cherished by men were necessarily deteriorating under the influence of the coarse and vulgar doctrines, which held military obedi-

ence and duty performed in the battle-field an ample atonement for the absence of every ennobling quality of the heart, and elevating gift of the mind.

Even hope itself seemed to have fled the world at the moment when Napoleon reached the zenith of power on which we have seen him placed. So heavy was the gloom resting on Europe, that men grew superstitious in their despair; and seeing no gleam of light along the dark and chain-bound earth, sought for hope in the celestial appearances perfectly familiar to the eye of science,—even in the appearance of the comet, that in the autumn of 1811 shone so brilliantly along the midnight sky. On the hills of the Peninsula, the untutored Spaniard pointed to the blazing meteor, and told that it announced the downfall of tyranny: in the halls of German learning, the enthusiastic scholar hailed the "traveller of immensity," and proclaimed it a shred from the pall of glory, riven and cast far upon the vaults of space to tell the afflicted world that, after so many years of sufferings, the hour of freedom had come at last: and Providence, looking down in mercy perhaps on the sorrows of millions, allowed an ordinary phenomenon of nature to serve as the arch of promise so ardently solicited by prostrate nations.

BOOK FIRST.

MOSCOW.

——— AND "THE MEMORABLE YEAR,
THAT GAVE TO SLAUGHTER AND TO SHAME,
THE MIGHTIEST HOST, THE HAUGHTIEST NAME."
BYRON.

BOOK FIRST.

MOSCOW.

CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON AT THE ZENITH OF POWER MARCHES AGAINST RUSSIA HIS ALLIANCES, VAST PREPARATIONS, AND FALSE MEASURES. HE INSULTS SWEDEN, AND NEGLECTS TURKEY: EXPLOITS OF THE BRITISH IN SPAIN: NAPOLEON HOLDS A COURT OF KINGS AND PRINCES AT DRESDEN: JOINS HIS ARMY AND CROSSES THE NIEMEN: THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER AT WILNA: UNPREPARED STATE OF THE RUSSIANS, WHO RETIRE BEFORE THE ADVANCING FRENCH.

The gloom which hung over Europe had attained to almost murky darkness when, in the summer of 1812, Napoleon marched against Russia, "with half mankind embattled by his side." The last combat for the independence of nations was now to be tried, and even the best champions of freedom paused when they contemplated the vast multitudes assembled to aid the hand of oppression; for since the myriads of Xerxes "starved exhausted regions in their way," no host of equal magnitude, and composed of so many and such various nations, had ever been arrayed under one

banner of war. France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Poland, Italy, and Spain,* contributed the thousands now assembled round the Imperial eagles, prepared to advance against the soldiers gathered from the boundless dominions of the Czar, and from the numerous tribes and races, subject to the Muscovite sceptre. From the opposite and most distant extremities of the old Continent, from "Gades gilded by the Western beam," to the frozen shores of Eastern Kamschatka, the earth was swept in its greatest breadth to furnish combatants for this gigantic struggle. And ask we the reason why the world was called upon for so lavish a contribution of blood,—called upon to bear the frightful addition of woe such a war could not fail to occasion? The answer is, that a vain man, whom thousands yet strive to justify—to make us idolize indeed—was not satisfied with holding absolute sway over the fairest portions of Europe, with possessing greater power than princely hands had ever wielded in Christian times, but wished to bend even the half-barbarous regions of the north beneath the yoke of his iron rule.

The differences which led to the rupture between France and Russia, though hardly perceived at the time of their origin, were already of some standing. Napoleon's refusal to carry into effect the partition of Turkey, which he was the first to propose, had displeased Alexander. The Czar was not satisfied with the acquisition of Finland and the permission to tear Wallachia and Moldavia from the Turks, and had left Erfurt with feelings by no means very favourable to the French alliance. The French Emperor, on his part, was not, perhaps, much

* One division of the first corps was composed of Spanish troops sent by King Joseph.

better affected towards his northern friend: for when, after the deposition of Gustavus IV., a definitive peace was to be concluded between Russia and Sweden, he already endeavoured to devise means for evading his promise to the Czar, and for preventing Finland from falling into Muscovite hands. But as the Austrian war broke out at this time, the alliance of Alexander, even if nominal only, became necessarily of too much value to be risked for distant objects; Sweden was abandoned to its fate; and momentary interest kept Napoleon true to his impolitic and dishonourable compact.

The Austrian campaign widened the breach between the parties. Napoleon, awaiting events, as Bignon very frankly avows, had evaded giving any explicit declaration respecting his intentions towards Poland and the Duchy of Warsaw; he had excited the Galicians to revolt, a measure that gave great umbrage at Petersburg, as it awakened the hopes of the Poles, and had the appearance of being a step towards the restoration of their independence.

The French also had their causes of complaint. The Russian contingent acted feebly during the campaign; and the French had intercepted a letter addressed to the Arch-Duke John by the Russian General Gortchacoff, in which the hope was expressed that "the troops of the two nations would soon fight in the same cause." Napoleon sent the letter to Petersburg, and the General was removed from the service; but the contents proved that there existed in the army a deep spirit of hostility towards France.

The peace of Vienna only augmented the difficulties which the war had occasioned. A district of eastern Galicia was bestowed on the King of Saxony, as Grand-Duke of Warsaw; and a Polish state, ready to become

the nucleus of a future kingdom, was thus called into existence. Alexander was greatly displeased, nor was he altogether satisfied with the declaration of Napoleon, who willingly conceded "that the words Poles and Poland should disappear, not only from all political transactions, but from history itself." How the name and fame of a brave people were to be effaced from the page of history we are not told: and while one spark of justice shall animate the hearts of men, so long will the glory of relieving Vienna, of saving whole Christian nations from Turkish oppression, adhere to Sobieski and the Poles, even as the stain inflicted by the declaration here quoted will continue to blacken the character of its author. This declaration was not, however, sufficient to calm the fears of the Czar, who, during the whole negotiation, seems to have been haunted by the spectre of Polish independence. He demanded a distinct engagement, by which Napoleon should bind himself to prevent the kingdom of Poland from ever being restored; and this the latter declined to grant. In every despatch he asserts, indeed, that he has not the slightest intention to restore the independence of Poland; but in the Memoirs dictated at St Helena, he declares that his resolution to restore that kingdom was the true and only cause of the war with Russia. As the discussion proceeded, the spirits were not only a little embittered, but fresh causes of complaint were added on both sides.

We have seen, that soon after the termination of the Austrian campaign, Napoleon seized upon the Duchy of Oldenburg, the hereditary dominions of the Czar's brother-in-law; an act in itself of barefaced robbery, and a direct infringement, besides, of the treaty of Tilsit. Alexander protested against the proceeding; but though compensation was promised, none followed; on the con-

trary, complaints were made to meet complaints; and the very protest against this act of violence was deemed an offence.

Russia suffered greatly from the effect of the Continental System. The bulky nature of her export produce, hides, flax, tallow, tar and timber, renders it impossible to carry them with profit to any distance, except by sea. The English had been the principal purchasers of these articles; but the Russian ports were now shut against them, and English ships of war blockaded the hostile coast. The complete stagnation of trade occasioned by these measures, pressed heavily on all classes, but principally on the *boyars*, or great landholders, who were thus deprived of the best markets for the produce of their estates, and very justly accused the French Alliance as the cause of the ruin that was rapidly extending. The national feeling became so averse to these commercial restrictions, that the Emperor was compelled to relax the severity of the decree against the trade with England, at the very time when he doubled the import duties levied on articles principally of French manufacture. This led to indignant reclamations on the part of Napoleon, and to firm replies on the part of Alexander.

But though moderation and good temper might easily have removed the ostensible motives put forward as the cause of this gigantic war, the real one, which lay in the very character of the French Emperor, seemed almost insurmountable. The Czar no sooner heard that Maria Louisa had accepted the hand of the French Emperor, than he very justly observed, that "the next step would be an attempt to drive him and the Russians back into their forests:" and it is more than probable, that Napoleon's vanity, wounded by the refusal of the Grand Duchess, hastened on the rupture. But its main cause

was, the conviction felt by Russia, by all Europe indeed, that force of arms only could set bounds to that craving for power and dominion, that insatiable desire for universal rule, which his actions had long evinced, and which his words now hardly deigned to conceal.

In 1811 he already addressed the following characteristic speech to his confidential ministers. We render it verbally, from the copy which, by imperial permission perhaps, came into the hands of the Prussian minister. "Gentlemen," he said, "I must explain myself: I am, in regard to Russia, in a false position, which cannot continue. The Emperor does not fulfil the engagements he has entered into; he receives English merchandise in his ports. He will not adhere to the Continental System; but I shall force him to it. I cannot depend upon him. I must have all the ports of the Baltic; my *douaniers* must extend to Petersburg: my situation requires it. If the Emperor objects, I shall make war upon him, and dictate my own terms at Petersburg.

"Prussia seems well disposed; but I cannot depend upon her. The Government are willing to liquidate their obligations, and have made proposals to that effect; but I must have guarantees. Prussia is not indifferent to me. Do you know that Prussia is worth a hundred thousand men to me? She has forty thousand men on foot; if these join the Russians, I must have forty thousand men to meet them, which makes eighty thousand; and then Silesia will become a perfect *Vendée*, which I shall not be able to keep in order with less than sixty thousand men: that already makes a hundred and twenty thousand.

"The Prussian troops are very good. True, they have never done anything: but why? no one knew how to command them. If I had led them, they would have

fought as well as the French. The King of Prussia has offered me his army; but I must have securities. The Prussian soldiers do not like me, and I shall not be able to depend upon them, unless I have hostages. The King might indeed accompany me to the field; but a King and an Emperor in one army has inconveniences: there are too many mutual attentions required, not to occasion embarrassment. I will have the Princes; they will serve as hostages for the fidelity of the troops. I shall treat them well, depend upon it; and when the soldiers see their Princes serving under me, they will become accustomed to obey me, and the Princes will learn how to make war. If Prussia behaves well, I will do her as much good as I have done her harm. I will enlarge her territory: who knows indeed what I may not do?

"But I must have all the ports. I shall build twenty-five ships of war in the Baltic, and that will prevent the English from entering it.

"Saxony is not well disposed. The King, old fool, —*vieille bête*—does not know how to govern the Duchy of Warsaw, which, for want of a better, I gave him at the time. I had lately some intentions with regard to Murat; but I have since had reason to be displeased with him. I shall see what is to be done with Poland. Bavaria and Würtemberg behave very well; but they have enough already: Baden is also very well; but the Grand Duke of Würtzburg is my relative; he behaves well, I am attached to him, and will enlarge his dominions. I must also make some trifling addition to the Grand-Duchy of Frankfort. With the conduct of Denmark I am greatly displeased; but have not yet resolved what steps to take with regard to the country."*

* Lebensbilder, &c., &c.

Though spoken in very homely prose, the import of this speech was certainly in character of him

> "Whose game was empires, and whose stakes were thrones—
> Whose table earth—whose dice were human bones."

During a public levee, held at the Tuileries, he addressed Prince Kourakin, the Russian Ambassador, in the same style in which, as we have seen, he had formerly addressed Lord Whitworth and Count Metternich on similar occasions. After speaking of the ill success of the Russians in their operations against the Turks, and almost taxing the Ambassador's explanation with falsehood, he proceeded thus:—"Be it good fortune, the bravery of my troops, or because I understand something of the business, I have always been successful in war. I do not say that I shall beat you; but we shall fight—*nous nous battrons*.—You know that I have money, that I have 800,000 men, and that every year places 250,000 conscripts at my disposal. In three years I can, therefore, augment my army by 700,000 men, which will enable me to carry on the war in Spain, and against you at the same time. If you reckon upon Austria, you will be deceived: for if that power is again able to appear upon the scene, it will only be to reclaim the territory formerly ceded to you."

Nor did taunts cease here. Among the complimentary addresses presented to the Emperor on the birth of the King of Rome, was one from the General Council of Commerce. Napoleon's reply, besides being worded in his usual style of pompous exaggeration, contained passages that gave great offence at Petersburg, and were, indeed, directly insulting to Russia. "If I made peace at Tilsit," he said, "it was because the Emperor Alexander promised to hold no farther communication with

England: for nothing could have prevented me from marching to Riga, Petersburg, or Moscow. My revenues are perfectly clear. I have two hundred millions of francs belonging to myself, here under these very vaults. I do not require them to take my chocolate or coffee; and they shall be at the service of the state whenever they are wanted.

"Were I only King of France, I should be obliged to act as Louis XIV. and Louis XV. acted; but I am *the Emperor of the Continent;* and it is necessary to go back to Charlemagne to form an idea of the power I possess."*

It is true, that Napoleon endeavoured afterwards to soften down the unfavourable impression these words had created, by causing milder versions of the speech to be published in some of the Continental journals; but he never ventured directly to deny the offensive expressions themselves, which would have been as easy as proper, had they not been uttered. So far, however, from denying the views contained in his speech, he rather embodied them in more distinct terms when writing to the Emperor Alexander himself, at a moment when the dispute had already reached a dangerous height. In this letter Napoleon, after reminding the Czar of the great advantages he had derived from the French connection, reminding him that valuable provinces of Turkey and Sweden, of the ancient allies of France, had been sacrificed to gratify his wishes, goes on to say, that "if Russia makes peace with England, it will be the certain signal of a war with France." This was almost claiming the power of the title that he had assumed; it was "*the Emperor of the Continent*" forbidding Russia,

* Bignon, chap. xvii. vol. ii.

under pain of his displeasure, to make peace with England;—in other words, to exercise the right belonging to all independent states of making peace or war at pleasure.

At a later period of the negotiation, this claim of superiority is avowed in almost open terms. In a letter of the 25th February 1812, addressed by the Duke of Basano, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to General Lauriston, French Ambassador at Petersburg, there is the following passage: "The Emperor," says the Minister, "is as indifferent to an interview as to a negotiation, unless the 450,000 men he has put in motion, with all their immense *materiel*, cause serious reflections to be made at Petersburg, bring back the cabinet to the system established at Tilsit, and replace Russia in the state of inferiority in which she then was."* This, it must be admitted, was speaking plainly and distinctly, claiming a superiority to which no independent state could submit. At a later period, the Duke of Basano says, "His majesty the Emperor has no wish to make war; but he is resolved, and nothing can alter his resolution, to effect the display of immense forces, and place himself on the Vistula." That is, if Russia concedes the point at issue, it must be under the uplifted sword, raised to enforce submission. And it must be confessed, that the enormous host assembled for this purpose, seemed almost to render vain every hope of successful resistance.

Notwithstanding the peace of Vienna, the conscription had continued to supply its annual myriads to the ranks of the regular army, which was estimated at 850,000 men; and to render the whole of this vast force disposable for distant enterprises, a national guard, to consist of three classes, called the *Ban*, the second *Ban*,

* Bignon, Book XIII.

and *Arriere Ban*, was now decreed. The first *Ban* was to consist of all men from twenty to twenty-six years, who had not served in the army. The second *Ban* included all capable of bearing arms, from the age of twenty-six to that of forty. The *Arriere Ban* comprehended all able-bodied men from forty to sixty. These levies were only to be called out when danger pressed, and were not to be sent beyond the frontiers; but a hundred cohorts, amounting to more than 100,000 men, were nevertheless placed at the immediate disposal of the Minister of War.

The regular troops now under Napoleon's control were estimated at 1,152,194 men, of whom 295,517 belonged to allied states. If from this vast multitude we deduct one-fifth for non-effectives, it still leaves 921,756 assembled round the colours.

And even this host was to be augmented. As the time for action drew near, alliances were formed with Austria and Prussia; the former was to furnish an auxiliary corps of 30,000, the latter of 20,000 men. By a secret article of the treaty with Austria, it was stipulated that she was to receive the Illyrian provinces in exchange for Galicia, in case the Emperor of France should find it advisable to restore the kingdom of Poland. Contrary to the assertion of historians, Napoleon had therefore left himself free hands on this point, though he made no use of the great advantage which the arrangement gave him. It was also settled that Austria was to receive an augmentation of territory, proportionate to her exertions, and to the success achieved.

Prussia was less favourably dealt with. Both governments were suspicious of each other, and it was known at Berlin that a plan for dismemberment of the Prussian monarchy had been submitted to Napoleon by one of

his ministers: the Emperor had several times told Prince Schwarzenberg, then Austrian Ambassador at Paris, that he intended to attack Prussia; and though the project had not been acted upon, it necessarily occasioned dread and mistrust. And as the French government had, by some of the low practices to which they so frequently resorted, obtained the key to the cipher then used by the Prussian authorities in their official correspondence, they had ample means of discovering the unfriendly sentiments entertained towards them in return.

Both parties were therefore on their guard, but not upon an equal footing; and Prussia, thinking that it was only by the friendship of Napoleon that safety could be maintained, offered to enter into a treaty of alliance with him. The offer was readily accepted, though with an insolence of manner which has no parallel in diplomatic history: for the Duke of Basano's note left the Prussian minister little time to decide between the proffered alliance and the dismemberment of the monarchy. The treaty, when signed, guaranteed the integrity of the Prussian dominions; but the conditions imposed upon the exhausted and impoverished country, which was to furnish vast supplies and means of conveyance, were harsh in the extreme; nor was any reward to be given for the sacrifices thus demanded.

But at the very time when Napoleon was strengthening his hands by these alliances, he was, with inconceivable levity and want of judgment, casting away other and more valuable connections. Sweden, the ancient ally of France, and the enemy of Russia, had been deprived of Finland by the latter power, and was naturally anxious to regain the valuable and interesting province that formed nearly a third of the monarchy. For the

recovery of Finland the Swedes would probably have forgiven the sufferings inflicted upon them by the Continental System; and in a war against Russia, fighting in a national, popular and good cause—fighting for the conquest of provinces dear to the people, and unjustly torn from them—they would have been far more valuable allies than the unwilling soldiers of Austria and Prussia. The wishes of both nations tended towards such an alliance; but the vanity of weak men, dressed in brief authority, prevented a union that might have been dangerous to the general interests of Europe.

The official correspondence of Monsieur Alquier, the French Ambassador at Stockholm, was every day furnishing the most ludicrous proofs of the excessive vanity which formed almost the leading feature of the Crown Prince's character. Personal jealousy and dislike of Napoleon were also very evident in his behaviour; but a stranger in Sweden, he would necessarily have been obliged to conform to the wishes, and what seemed indeed the natural interest, of the nation, had not the arrogant conduct of the French Emperor excited the indignation of the whole people, and thrown them into the arms of Russia. Instead of acting on the weakness of Bernadotte, he offended him by appearing to treat him as a subordinate rather than as an independent Prince: and the latter having hesitated to enforce some further restrictions of the Continental System, which already pressed so heavily on Sweden, and refused to receive French *douaniers* into Gottenburg, Napoleon, in January 1812, and when the war with Russia was already certain, ordered his troops to enter Swedish Pomerania, confiscated the ships found in the harbours, removed the authorities, and levied contributions.

This act of aggression naturally excited indignation

in Sweden; and on the 25th March the Crown Prince already signed a treaty of alliance with Russia. By this compact, Sweden was to assist Russia in the war against France, and was to be rewarded, not by the restitution of Finland, but by the annexation of Norway; which was to be taken from a brave, upright, and unoffending people, at peace with both the aggressive parties, in order to aid Russia, and gratify the revolutionary ambition of Bernadotte! The Prince had previously solicited Napoleon's permission to tear this ancient and long possessed kingdom from the crown of Denmark; and though the latter had refused to sanction the robbery, it was not, as may be supposed, on any very elevated principle of political morality, but simply because he "would not," as he said, "sacrifice a faithful to an uncertain ally."

Turkey was as completely slighted as Sweden had been. By the arrangement of Erfurt, Russia was allowed to tear from the Porte the Moldavian and Wallachian provinces, which her troops had invaded in consequence; but the Moslems had made a stouter resistance than was expected, and the commencement of the year 1812 still found the parties contending for supremacy along the banks of the Danube. The cabinet of St Petersburg perceiving, however, the storm then about to break upon the Empire, entered into negotiations with the Turks; and by the exertions of the English minister, a peace between the hostile countries was concluded at Bucharest on the 18th May. During this important negotiation, the result of which rendered the whole of the Russian army of Moldavia disposable against France, Napoleon had not even an ambassador at Constantinople; and it was only after the signature of the treaty that he offered to recover the disputed pro-

vinces as well as the Crimea for the Turks, if they would march an army to his assistance. The Osmanlis, who, for the last two centuries at least, have always adhered most honourably to the engagements contracted with foreign powers, rejected the offer; and as the best ground of their conduct, presented the French Ambassador with a copy of the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit, which stipulated the dismemberment of their European dominions! Made at a proper time, Napoleon's proposal might have been acceptable; but here again overweening confidence blinded him, and deprived him, at the most important crisis of his fate, of all the aid he could have derived from an ancient ally of France, and national enemy of Russia.

At the very time when, from all quarters, he was hurrying myriads towards the Vistula, he was also endeavouring to open negotiations with England. Lord Wellington had assumed the offensive in Spain, and commenced operations by actions of a character altogether new in modern warfare. After a siege of only ten days' duration, Ciudad-Rodrigo* was taken by storm on the 8th January; and on the 6th April, the sixteenth day of the investment, Badajos was already carried by escalade. Such victories, and achieved against troops of the highest reputation, naturally attracted the attention of the military world, and proclaimed to the enemies of France that there was an attainable degree of soldiership, before which even the laurel-crowned victor of Austerlitz and Friedland would have to bend. Whether it was some dark foreboding of this ultimate result which induced Napoleon to make overtures at this time,—whether he was really desirous of peace, or

* "*Ce diable de Wellington ramasse toujours la pomme perdue*," said Napoleon, on learning the capture of the fortress.

only expected to intimidate Russia by negotiating with England, we have no means of knowing: possibly his own ideas were not very clear on the subject; or all the three motives partially combined, may have exercised some influence over his conduct. On the 19th April, the Duke of Basano wrote to Lord Castlereagh, proposing a negotiation for peace, on the basis, that the independence and integrity of Spain should be guaranteed under the "present reigning dynasty;" that Portugal should remain under the rule of the House of Braganza, Sicily under King Ferdinand, and Naples under Murat; each nation retaining in this manner whatever the other could not take from it by force of arms. Lord Castlereagh immediately replied, that if the reign of King Joseph was meant by the phrase, "the dynasty actually reigning," he must declare explicitly, that England's engagements with Ferdinand VII. and the Cortes presently governing Spain, rendered her acknowledging him impossible.

The correspondence went no farther; but Lord Castlereagh's letter proved evidently that there was no objection, on the part of the English government, to any of the other points proposed in the Duke of Basano's letter. By yielding Spain, there was now a fair prospect of obtaining peace with England, and preserving it with Russia, for that power would hardly have taken the field if England had withdrawn from the contest. The sacrifice of Spain, it will be said, was greater than could be expected from Napoleon; but he had, shortly before, made the Duke of Cadore tell the Spanish deputies, that he contemplated restoring Ferdinand to the throne of his fathers; and now, when such a sacrifice might have ensured a peace with England,—the only peace which could give permanent security to his throne and dynasty

—he declined to make it. And with a sanguinary war of four years' duration still raging in the Peninsula, he rushed without a shadow of cause into a new contest of gigantic magnitude, in which the very elements, unconquerable in their might, were certain to take part against him.

Nor were the storms of the North, the wasted deserts of Russia, the only dangers to be apprehended from this new enterprise. Germany, brooding over her wrongs and sufferings, waited but an opportunity to take arms against the oppressor; and the general spirit of the country was represented to the Emperor from various quarters. No one stated the case with more boldness and ability than his own brother, the King of Westphalia, from whose letter we quote the following passage:—"I am not aware, Sire," says this imperial observer, "in what colours your Agents and Generals depict the situation of Germany; but they deceive your Majesty, if they represent it as feeble, tranquil and submissive. Excitement is at its height; the most extravagant hopes are cherished, circulated and received with enthusiasm. The people propose to themselves the example of Spain; and if war breaks out, the whole country, from the Rhine to the Oder, will become the scene of vast and active insurrections.

"It is not merely hatred of the French, and impatience of a foreign yoke, that gives the impulse to this movement: the stronger cause is to be found in the misfortunes of the times; in the ruin of all classes; in the weight of taxes and war contributions; in the support of troops; and in the endless vexations occasioned by the constant passage of soldiers. The despair of nations, who have been deprived of every thing, who have nothing more to lose, is naturally to be dreaded. The mass of

mankind are indifferent to high political combinations, and feel only the pressure of the evils under which they chance to labour."

Napoleon did not even honour this very just warning with so much attention as to gather its real import; for he only observed to the Duke of Basano, that "if Jerome could not depend upon his troops it was his own fault, as he probably spent too much money." Here was no complaint about the fidelity of troops; but the incident shows how callous this modern Sesostris was to the sufferings of nations subject to his sway, and with what a total want of ability the man of pretended genius rushed upon that ruin, which even King Jerome could foresee.

The Emperor Alexander, who, according to one of Caulaincourt's despatches, "was politic enough to look into business, notwithstanding his chivalrous appearance," often declared in the course of the negotiation, that he had no intention to cross the Russian frontier; and that those who wished to make war upon him, would be forced to come and attack him in his own dominions. It seemed a little at variance, therefore, with this extremely pacific language, that on the 30th of April, Prince Kourakin presented to the Duke of Basano a note, in which Russia demanded the evacuation of Prussia and of Swedish Pomerania by the French troops, as well as a reduction of the garrison of Dantzig: the Ambassador stating at the same time, that he had to demand his passports if these terms were not complied with. Napoleon's departure had been delayed in consequence of disturbances in the provinces, occasioned by the high price of bread; and this obstacle removed, he set out from Paris on the 7th May, accepting war as the alternative of leaving, what were termed the insulting pro-

posals of Russia unanswered. He was accompanied by the Empress as far as Dresden, where the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and most of the other Kings and Princes of Germany, arrived to render homage to their real lord-superior.

And never had the occupant of princely throne stood in a position so brilliant as the one in which Napoleon stood at Dresden: on the very verge of fate, Destiny seemed to take a strange pleasure in surrounding him, for the last time, with all the show, pomp, and glitter so gratifying to triumphant vanity. The spectacle was intended, perhaps, as a great moral lesson to mankind, who were to behold power, splendour, and dominion of never equalled lustre and magnificence, bestowed by Fortune upon one who, affecting greatness without worth or virtue, saw not the capricious hand that raised him, and wanted strength, when deprived of her aid, to retain a single fragment of the world which had been his own.

In the capital of a German kingdom, Napoleon appeared as the Sovereign of all surrounding princes. Occupying the royal palace, he did all the honours; it was to his table, and not to the table of the King of Saxony, that the Princes and Sovereigns present at Dresden came as invited guests; and it was in his halls that the crowned courtiers and their families assembled. The Emperor's levees were held at nine in the morning, and were crowded with princes who, almost lost in the throng of attendants, waited anxiously the moment to appear before the new arbiter of their destinies; and the trivial questions asked by the Emperor were as remarkable, as the humble and submissive tone in which they were answered.

It was at one of these levees, that *Monsieur* De Pradt heard Napoleon utter the words which he thinks de-

serving of the first rank in the annals of vanity. The Duke of Neuchatel, having reported that Count Metternich objected to some arrangement proposed to him, the Emperor, assuming a tone of haughty displeasure, immediately exclaimed,—"To talk of diplomatising with me!" then adding some of the terms of reproach he was in the habit of using, he turned to the circle, saying, with an air that no one will ever be able to describe, "It is surely a proof of the weakness of human understanding to think it possible to contend against me!" "Never," continues the Archbishop, "can these words be effaced from my recollection: Nebuchadnezzar the Proud must have been a model of humility compared to the man impregnated with such a dose of self-esteem." "The air," which, according to De Pradt, "will never be described," was evidently that of an extremely weak and inflated person; for no extent of vanity, deemed at all compatible with the slightest degree of mental power and dignity, will ever be believed to have expressed itself in this manner: it was vanity holding absolute and unchecked sway over a weak intellect.

Previous to the receipt of the Russian note already mentioned, Napoleon had despatched his aide-de-camp, Count Narbonne, to Wilna with a letter to the Emperor Alexander. The desire to preserve peace was the ostensible object of this mission: its real one, as we perceive from the Count's instructions, nothing more than to ascertain the actual state of the Russian preparations; but for this, little time was left the messenger, who was soon sent back to his Imperial Master; and as he brought nothing more than a duplicate of the *ultimatum* already delivered by Prince Kourakin, Napoleon immediately prepared to open the campaign.

He left Dresden on the 29th May, and after inspect-

ing several divisions advancing into Poland, reached the Niemen, with the main body of his army, on the 22d of June. Disguised in the cloak and forage-cap of a light horseman of the Polish Guard, he reconnoitred the river. As he reached the bank, his horse fell and threw him on the sand: "A bad omen!" exclaimed a voice; "a Roman would retire." Whether the words were uttered by himself or by one of his retinue, is not known; but the omen at least did not intimidate him. Three bridges were ordered to be thrown across the stream: no enemy appeared to offer the slightest resistance, and on the 24th the troops with exulting shouts already trod the soil which their bones were destined to manure. Before the passage was effected, the Emperor's proclamation was read to the army; it announced that "the second Polish war had commenced, and would terminate as gloriously as the first: it promised a permanent peace after bounds should be set to the fatal influence which Russia had so long exercised over the destinies of Europe."

Napoleon's own views and expectations are best explained by the words he addressed to *Monsieur* De Pradt at Dresden, when he appointed him ambassador to Warsaw: "I go to Moscow," he said: "one or two battles will settle the business. The Emperor Alexander will throw himself on his knees; I shall burn Thoula,"—the great arsenal,—"and then Russia is disarmed. Moscow is the heart of the empire; I am expected there. Besides, I shall carry on the war with Polish blood: I shall leave 50,000 French in Poland: I am making a second Gibraltar of Dantzig. I shall give fifty millions annually to the Poles; they have no money, and I am rich enough for that. Without Russia, the Continental System is mere folly. Spain costs me a great deal;

but for her I should have been master of Europe. When all this is accomplished, my son will only have to hold his place. No great cunning will be required for that. Go and get your instructions from Maret."

This speech is singularly characteristic of the man: it not only shows that falsehood and deception were so habitual to him, that he deceived even his confidential ministers; but that he was incapable of systematically acting up to his own crude and ill-digested conceptions; for as we shall see, no attempt was made to carry into effect some of the most important parts of the plan here laid down. Nor did any party or set of men expect him or look for him at Moscow, as he asserts.

It is but justice to say, however, that in undertaking this expedition, Napoleon did not, as we are usually told, overlook altogether the difficulty of finding supplies for his troops; but, though not blind to the difficulty, he certainly wanted the ability to remove it. Stores were collected, vast magazines were formed, the marshals and generals commanding army corps and divisions were directed to supply their troops with herds of cattle, and with parks of carriages for the conveyance of bread, brandy, and the most essential necessaries. But the error, or folly rather, was to suppose that the system of supplying the troops with provisions by means of a regular commissariat, was compatible with his method of war, and could be made to work, without the slightest previous instruction, training, or preparation; above all, with a corrupt administration, and in an army of such magnitude, composed of soldiers accustomed to the demoralizing practice of enforcing requisition in the rich provinces of Italy and Germany: it was to suppose that a general order could change the very nature of men and make them perfect, by merely commanding them to be so.

The consequence of this attempt was, that the German and Polish provinces traversed by the troops, were first plundered by the civil functionaries and then by the soldiers. The grossest and most barefaced corruption disgraced every department of the commissariat; negligence, robbery, deficiency of skill and arrangement, were apparent from the very first; thousands perished for want in the midst of plenty; and a small proportion only of the supplies, carriages, and cattle, reached even the Niemen.

The Marquis de Chambray, whose word cannot be doubted, and who is besides well supported by German authorities, expressly declares, that the troops already lived by rapine and marauding in their march through Prussia; and it is a well-authenticated fact, that in the hospitals established along the line of march,—absolute dens of death and despair,—French medical officers refused to furnish the German troops with the medicines collected by requisition in their own country, unless for ready money, which the harpies applied to their own use. From the very commencement of the expedition, excesses and disorders marked its progress to an extent that clearly foretold its fate. The carriages for the conveyance of stores, necessaries, and provisions; those belonging to the princes, marshals, generals, and their attendants, as well as to the civil functionaries,—a vast number of whom accompanied the army,—formed, in addition to the regular parks, a following and a mass of baggage, such as the world had never seen in the train of a European army. And the very soldiers who, under Republican banners, had boasted of only carrying arms along with them into the field; who had exulted in the name derived from their nakedness, now sallied forth on their military expeditions with far more than Eastern

pomp and magnificence. If *sans culottism* still existed, it was not in the exterior appearance of the French army, whence it had completely vanished from the moment Republican generals and commanders assumed royal and imperial robes: from that moment the luxury of the *ancien régime* formed an alliance with the new practice of levying contributions, and thus produced a system of acting, by which countries were laid bare, and provinces ruined, with never-equalled rapidity.

The natural evils of war, death, wounds, the awful sufferings of the wounded, and the destruction of the towns and villages that happen to be the immediate scenes, of action, may be justified by the higher considerations that render an appeal to arms necessary. But the mode of warfare that debases the soldier to the level of the robber; that, by a total subversion of discipline, gives the rein to the worst passions of our nature, in the very worst and most trying situations,—that endangers the soul as well as the body, and spreads sorrow and desolation far and wide,—can admit of no palliative capable of screening its author from unmitigated reprobation.

The armies which, in the last days of June, Napoleon led across the Russian frontier, amounted to 452,173 men.* "If a number of writers," says the able author

* Strength of the French and allied armies that entered Russia during the campaign of 1812, taken from official documents, and where these were wanting, from the Marquis de Chambray's work:—

Troops at the Imperial Head-Quarters,	3,983	men.
Guards, Marshal Bossiers,	47,300	„
I. Corps, Marshal Davoust,	72,051	„
II. Corps, Marshal Oudinot,	37,139	„
III. Corps, Marshal Ney,	39,300	„
IV. Corps, Viceroy of Italy,	42,400	„
V. Corps, Prince Poniatoski,	36,311	„
Carry over,	278,484	

of a private journal we shall yet have to quote, " praise the high condition of the host assembled on the Niemen, they must have formed their opinion from the deceitful impression of the first moment. True it is, that a finer, more numerous, and more efficient army could not be seen; but the infantry had been brought from a distance by rapid marches, and required rest and refreshment, instead of being immediately precipitated into new toils, and exposed to want and privation of every description. The horses of the cavalry were also in a reduced state,

Brought forward,	278,484	men.
VI. Corps, Gen. Gouvien St Cyr,	30,000	,,
VII. Corps, Gen. Réynier,	19,300	,,
VIII. Corps, Gen. Vandamme,	19,000	,,
IX. Corps, Marshal M'Donald,	32,500	,,
Austrian Auxiliary Corps, Prince Schwarzenberg,	34,000	,,
I. Cavalry Corps, Gen. Nansouti,	22,077	,,
II. Cavalry Corps, Gen. Montbrun,	10,436	,,
III. Cavalry Corps, Gen. Grouchy,	9,676	,,
IV. Cavalry Corps, Gen. Latour Maubourg,	6,700	,,
	452,173	
Parks of Artillery, Engineers, and Military Equipages,	21,526	,,
Divisions that successively crossed the frontier at a later period of the campaign, viz.,		
X. Corps of Marshal Victor,	31,000	,,
Division of Gen. Darutte,	12,000	,,
Division of Gen. Loison,	12,000	,,
Austrian reinforcements,	5,800	,,
Westphalian, Wirtemberg, and Hessian troops, that joined during the retreat,	4,400	,,
Newly formed corps of the Duchy of Warsaw,	5,000	,,
	72,200	
Detachments formed into regiments of march, that crossed the frontier during the campaign,	80,000	,,
Grand total, With 1242 pieces of field artillery,	625,889	

half-famished indeed, and many had sore backs actually rotting under the saddle; for the French trooper has little affection for his steed, pays little attention to the animal, and still less to the state of his saddlery and appointments. The consequence was, that during the early stages of the march, we already saw French horsemen mounted on the small ponies of the country called *Kuniaks;* and the appearance, in the ranks, of these Lilliputian steeds mounted by colossal riders, excited at first universal astonishment."*

On the Lower Niemen, Marshal M'Donald commanded the left of the army; and on the Bug, Prince Schwarzenberg, with the Austrian corps and Réynier's division, led the right. From the farthest extremity of one wing to the other, the distance exceeded 300 miles, and thus presented a front of operation which rendered unity of action almost impossible. Napoleon, with the centre columns, pushed on towards Wilna, the head-quarters of the Russians, who were but indifferently prepared for the mighty struggle in which they found themselves engaged.

The Emperor Alexander intended to lead his army in person; but as he had never served in the field, much less commanded, he had for some time studied the art, or science of war, under the directions of a General Phull, formerly a colonel in the Prussian service, which he had left after the unfortunate events of 1806. This officer, who is represented as a man of honour, worth, and integrity, had served with some distinction in subordinate ranks, and acquired a reputation for military genius, principally, it is believed, from the bitter irony

* Fragmente aus der Geschichte des Feldzugs von 1812, Militair Wochenblatt, Berlin, 1839.

with which he assailed the misconduct of others; for he was totally incapable of taking any active part himself. He knew little from study, and experience had been lost upon him; it had borne no beneficial fruit in his mind, and he could see nothing beyond what he had *seen*: every new appearance in the world was therefore unexpected, and took him by surprise. He had risen to the rank of General in the Russian service, without even learning the Russian language, or becoming acquainted with the leading men in the state, or principal officers in the army, and was in fact totally unacquainted with the country his wisdom was now to defend. He accompanied the Emperor Alexander as first aide-de-camp, and was intended to act the part of a military genius, destined to inspire the imperial commander with the ideas necessary for the high duties he had imposed himself.

General Phull had no staff, no actual authority, no head-quarter office; he received neither reports nor returns, knew none of the Generals, was in no communication with Barclay, or with any of them; some holding important commands he did not even know by name. All he heard of the situation of the army was from the Emperor himself. The Czar, though attended by several aides-de-camp and a numerous retinue, had no general staff: so that he issued his orders sometimes through General Barclay de Tolly, the Commander of the first Western Army stationed in front of Wilna; sometimes through his aide-de-camp Prince Wolkonski, and occasionally through Phull: the orders of the latter were not always obeyed, as his position was not exactly understood.

The army thus inefficiently commanded, was as inefficient in point of numbers. Contrary to the assertion

of French writers who, to defend Napoleon's aggression, declare that Russia was already prepared to attack France in 1811, it is now proved that the army was weak, and the military arrangements in the most deplorable state of inefficiency. The whole disposable force amounted to 170,000 men, not including 10,000 Cossacks, and was divided into three armies stationed along the Western frontier. The first army, under Barclay de Tolly, was about 90,000 strong; the second, under Prince Bagration, 50,000; the reserve, under General Tormasoff, destined to defend Volhinia, amounted to 30,000 men. So composed and commanded were the forces destined to check Napoleon, at the head of his 400,000 war-tried soldiers! We could never have claimed credit for the truth of these statements, and the excess of feebleness which they disclose, unless upon authority equal to any that has ever been made the foundation of historical writing.*

Not only has the strength of the Russian armies been exaggerated, a plan of operations has been ascribed to them, which borders upon the sublime, and

* The Russian Campaign, 1812. By General Clausewitz. Berlin, 1835. A fragment published along with his Posthumous Works.

When the alliance between France and Russia became known at Berlin, a number of officers hostile to the French connection, and who might be termed the Scharnhorst party, retired from the service, some forsaking altogether the profession of arms, and others seeking employment under the banners of Napoleon's enemies. Among the latter was Clausewitz, then a Lieutenant-Colonel, who went to Wilna, where he was well received, and attached to General Phull himself. He afterwards served on the staff of the rear-guard, and was in constant and friendly communication with the Quartermaster-General of the Army. At a later period of the war, Clausewitz returned to the Prussian service, and died as Governor of Coblentz. His Work "On War" has attracted great attention in Germany, and shows the author to have been a man of high and commanding intellect.

which never for a moment entered into their contemplation. They intended, it is said, to retire into the interior of the empire, and lay waste the country on the advance of the enemy: whereas the fact is, that chance only, and a succession of errors and misconceptions, forced them to fall back very much against their inclination. According to the original plan of General Phull, the first army, under Barclay de Tolly, was to retire before the advancing enemy, and take post at Drissa on the Düna, less than 100 miles from the frontier, where a strongly fortified camp had been constructed for its reception. Here it was to meet its reinforcements, and gather strength in the same proportion as the enemy were diminished by their march in advance. The second army, under Prince Bagration, was at first to fall back in a southern direction; then turn and attack the rear and right flank of the French, as soon as they should be arrested by the fortified position at Drissa. This plan had been approved of by the Czar, as it bore some resemblance to the one successfully followed by Lord Wellington in Portugal. But there was this great difference between them—that the Duke of Wellington's camp was at the farthest extremity of his line of retreat, and could not be turned; whereas the camp of Drissa was only a few marches from the frontier, and could be turned by both flanks. It will be observed, that Prince Bagration's separation from the main army, which all French writers ascribe to the "sublime conception of Napoleon," was simply the result of this plan of operation: so soon as it was abandoned, the Prince rejoined the main army according to orders, notwithstanding the sublime conception which had destined him to destruction.

As the French masses rolled on, the Russians retired

unwillingly towards Drissa, for they were not at first aware of Napoleon's vast superiority ; and as their rear-guard had maintained some successful actions against the advanced division of the enemy, many officers were anxious for a battle, fearing that a prolonged retreat would damp the ardour of the troops. But fortune saved them from the effects of their own rashness ; they continued to give way, till learning by degrees the real strength of the invading army, ordinary prudence naturally forbade all thoughts of a general action until their forces should be fully united.

Unchecked by serious opposition, Napoleon entered Wilna, the capital of Lithuania : he was received with the wildest demonstrations of joy on the part of the people, who fancied that in the French they beheld the liberators of their long enslaved country. " Windows and balconies," says the Prussian Hussar already quoted, " were filled with persons of both sexes, who cheered us as we passed along. In the streets the joyful crowd almost impeded our march ; and from all directions wine and provisions were handed to the famished soldiers. It was the first and only happy scene of the whole campaign."

The Diet of the Duchy of Warsaw, anticipating what they believed to be the wishes of the conqueror—acting, indeed, under the direction of his ambassador, had already declared the kingdom of Poland free and independent, and restored to its former integrity ; and following up this measure, they sent a deputation to Wilna, to present an address to the Emperor, and to solicit their country's freedom from his hands. " Let but the great Napoleon," they said, " decree that the kingdom of Poland shall exist, and it will exist accordingly." But he on whom fortune had bestowed bound-

less power, wanted every gift by which real greatness can be achieved. Here was the opportunity of performing a great and noble action—an action that would have entitled him to the universal thanks of the world—again offered, and again rejected. The destinies of a brave and enslaved people were in his hands; it rested with him to break their chains; the generous deed would have augmented even his gigantic strength, would have gained for him the love of millions, and brought the sharp swords of myriads to his aid.

Instead of proclaiming the independence of Poland, and gaining a warlike nation for his cause, Napoleon spoke only of the many interests he had to reconcile, and of what he *would* have done in other times, and under different circumstances. He applauded the conduct of the Diet, and hoped that Providence would crown their efforts with success; but declared, that "he had guaranteed to the Emperor of Austria the integrity of his dominions, and could sanction no measure likely to deprive him of his remaining Polish provinces." And this, at the very time when he had the secret treaty in his pocket, by which Austria had placed Galicia at his disposal, in exchange for the Illyrian possessions she had formerly been obliged to relinquish!

This unpromising answer, so different from what had been anticipated, struck the deputies with fear and dismay; it chilled the national enthusiasm, and caused Napoleon's intentions to be suspected, at the very time when the misconduct of the troops, who pillaged and oppressed the country in every direction, completely alienated the good-will of the inhabitants from the French. The rapine practised by the soldiers, the insults and injuries they heaped upon the poor and suffering people, could lead to no other results, and quickly

crushed the patriotic ardour which it was their interest to have fanned. As an instance of this conduct, we may mention, that when *Monsieur* De Pradt arrived at the palace of the Bishop of Cujavie, the prelate's secretary, a canon of Cujavie, and decorated with the cross and ribbon of his chapter, still exhibited on his face marks of the blows inflicted by the hands of General Count Vandamme, who committed this act of brutality because he could obtain no tokay ; the King of Westphalia having already carried off the whole of the bishop's store of this imperial beverage. What was to be expected from private soldiers, suffering from toil and famine, when princes and generals behaved in this brigand style ? Lossberg even tells us, that at the very outset of the campaign, General Vandamme came to the front of the brigade in which he served, and reprimanded the officers, because the cattle, furniture, doors, windows, all the moveables in fact, of an adjoining village, were not yet collected in their camp !

It was shortly after his arrival at Wilna that Napoleon received the last offer of peace made to him during this campaign. The Russians had gradually become acquainted with the overwhelming superiority of the French forces, and had reverted from their original confidence of success, to gloomy reflections on the possible consequences of the terrible struggle in which they were engaged. The rapidly declining strength of the invading army was not believed at the Russian head-quarters, and the Emperor Alexander, rather than continue the chances of war, sent his aide-de-camp, General Balachow, with proposals of peace to Wilna, offering to persevere in the Continental System, and come to arrangements on the other points in dispute, provided the French would retire across the Niemen : declar-

ing, however, that he would never lay down his arms so long as a hostile soldier remained on the Russian soil. Napoleon declined the proposal in haughty style; and though he offered to negotiate, refused to retrace his steps, at the very time when the augmenting disorders in the army already foretold the certain fate of the expedition.

The Emperor remained three weeks at Wilna, endeavouring, perhaps, to reorganize the troops, who had suffered extraordinary losses considering the short distance marched over. The whole country was filled with straggling and famishing soldiers; villages and hamlets were already given to the flames, and the most frightful excesses committed against the defenceless inhabitants: the very suburbs of the Lithuanian capital were plundered while Napoleon was in the town. Little effect was produced by his attempts to remedy the evils, and having named the Duke of Basano, the minister of foreign affairs, Governor of Lithuania, commanded five regiments to be raised in the province, and an intrenched camp to be formed round the city, he set out for the army, which had been slowly following the retiring enemy.

CHAPTER II.

TREATY OF OREBRO: PLANLESS RETREAT OF THE RUSSIANS: COMBATS OF WITEBSK, SMOLENSK, AND VALUTINO GORA: BATTLE OF BORODINO: THE FRENCH ENTER MOSCOW: PART OF THE CITY DESTROYED BY FIRE: INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE CATASTROPHE.

So little were the Russians prepared for the early invasion of their country, that they had not even made peace with England. The arrangement could not, indeed, be attended with difficulty; but the treaty itself was only signed at Orebro on the 18th July, more than a month after the French had crossed the Niemen. Peace with Spain was signed two days afterwards.

Napoleon's delay at Wilna, and the slow advance of his troops, had been of great benefit to his adversaries. The vast superiority of the invaders, which was not believed in the first instance, had become sufficiently apparent before the retiring army reached Drissa; and there the impracticability of the original plan of operations soon became evident. The camp, though strong in front, could be turned by both flanks, and was perfectly open in the rear; and the French were still so greatly superior in numbers, that they could detach sufficient forces, not only to protect their own flank against the attacks of Prince Bagration, but sufficient to crush

him completely should he venture to come within their reach. All these circumstances shook the Czar's confidence in General Phull; and when the time came for Prince Bagration to fall on, the resolution to give the order failed, and he was fortunately commanded to retire and join the main army: every voice declared against a battle, till both hosts should be united.

If General Phull's plan was found to be impracticable, he evinced, on this occasion, a degree of noble-minded disinterestedness well deserving to be recorded. Seeing that the reins of command, held by the Emperor to be directed by another, produced very uncertain leading, he advised the Czar to resign them altogether to General Barclay, and to repair in person to Moscow and Petersburg, and hasten, by his own authority, the organization of the reinforcements and militias which the exigency of the times so imperatively demanded. This advice, which was immediately adopted, necessarily deprived the upright man who gave it of all participation in the direction of affairs, but led to the most salutary results.

As Barclay had resolved not to accept a battle till the junction with Bagration was effected, he placed Count Wittgenstein, with 25,000 men, on the Düna, to cover the Petersburg road, and by a flank movement to the left, carried the remainder of the troops to Witebsk; Prince Alexander of Wirtemberg, governor of the province, who happened accidentally to be at head-quarters, having assured him that its neighbourhood offered an impregnable position, in which the arrival of the second army could be safely awaited. As chance directed every thing in the Russian councils, this random advice also was followed, and fortune, which had formerly crowned the efforts of Napoleon, now

crowned his adversaries: to show, perhaps, that victory was the gift of her capricious hand, rather than the reward of the mighty strategical combinations to which it is so readily ascribed.

The French strove vainly to gain Witebsk before the Russians. And by the new direction their march had now taken, the war broke into five distinct lines, or theatres of operation: two on the left, and two on the right of the high road leading from Wilna to Moscow, and one in the centre, along that road itself. 1st, On the extreme left, M'Donald, with 32,000 men, directs his march into Courland to invest Riga, where he is opposed by General Essen with 12,000 men. 2d, On the Düna, near Polozk, Marshal Oudinot, afterwards reinforced by General St Cyr, has 67,000 men, and confronts General Wittgenstein, who at first commands only 25,000, and at a later period 50,000 men. 3d, In Southern Lithuania, Schwarzenberg and General Réynier move with 53,000 men against General Tormasow, who has at first only 30,000 men, but is afterwards supported by Admiral Tchitchagoff with the Moldavian army of about equal strength. 4th, General Dombrowski with his division of 10,000 men, observes the fortress of Bobruisk, and keeps in check General Hortel, who commands a reserve of 12,000 men at Mozyr. Lastly, In the centre, Napoleon himself leads on his 280,000 men against the 125,000 commanded by Barclay and Bagration. From right to left, the front of operations exceeds at this time 400 miles. We shall, in our narrative, confine ourselves to the movements of the main army, and speak only in general terms of flanking corps, without entering into the details of their operations.

The Russian army having reached Witebsk before

the French, Barclay sent out strong advanced guards on the Wilna road, to dispute the ground with the advancing enemy. This led to a succession of sharp actions, in which the Russians, though forced back by the invading masses, displayed good soldiership. On the 27th of July, Napoleon appeared in sight of the enemy, and anticipated with delight the prospect of a battle for the following morning, in which his vast superiority, and the indifference of the boasted position of the enemy, promised him certain victory; but he was here destined to meet with one of the many disappointments experienced during the campaign; the first break of morning gave only an empty camp to view: the Russians had retired during the night.

Bagration, when marching to join the main army in obedience to the order he had received, was fallen upon by Davoust and the Viceroy of Italy, who endeavoured to intercept his retreat. This led to several sharp actions that retarded the march of the Russians; and Barclay, finding that the French were already in his front before Bagration was near enough to take a share in the battle, fortunately for the cause declined the combat, and fell back to Smolensk, where the two armies joined, and where some reinforcements also met them.

Among these reinforcements was the main swarm of those Cossacks, who afterwards became so formidable from circumstances, and of whom it may be right to give some account here. We quote from the Prussian Hussar already mentioned.

"The manner of fighting peculiar to the Cossacks gives them great advantages over disciplined cavalry; because any repulse they may sustain occasions them little loss; for to pursue them in their wild flight would

lead to confusion, and oblige the victors to adopt the mode of fighting of the vanquished. The feeble side of these semi-barbarous warriors is their inability to stand a steady fire ; though dispersed along a line, every Cossack is individually an admirable skirmisher. In meadows, parties often dismount and skirmish on foot, leading their horses by the rein, and allowing them to graze. Several attempts on the part of the French to punish this supposed carelessness failed completely : aided by their comrades, the Cossacks sprang quickly on their horses, and received their foiled adversaries with loud shouts of laughter.

" When they intend an attack, a shout is raised along the line ; on which they collect in a mass, and throw themselves, with loud yells and couched spears, with bodies bent to their horses' mane, at full speed upon the foe. Such an onrushing swarm seems at first to be irresistible, and would be so were the onset continued as it is commenced. But this is not the case ; the Cossacks charge close up to the enemy, who are lost if they show the slightest want of firmness ; but are in little danger if they hold their ground firmly, and receive the assailants with a steady fire. When thus met, the Cossacks fly as fast as they advance, and with the same dexterity. The attack, gathering, and dispersion of these swarms was always executed in the most admirable manner, and with a degree of celerity that regular cavalry would find it difficult, if not impossible, to imitate. When they overthrow an enemy, the Cossacks pursue with daring boldness and perseverance ; but their eagerness for spoil then leads them into occasional difficulties, notwithstanding their usual quickness and sagacity."

The first action fought against these new adversaries is thus described :—

"After a long and toilsome march under the most oppressive heat, and amid clouds of dust, the division came up with the enemy beyond the village of Janowitz. The Russians had taken post behind some sheltering underwood, on the opposite side of a valley, and left only a few Cossacks on the plain. The evening was already far advanced, the horses were dreadfully exhausted; but the French, to ascertain the strength of the enemy perhaps, resolved to commence the action, which the latter seemed more inclined to avoid than to accept. Passing at a trot through the deserted hamlet, our division drew up on some rising ground that overlooked the intermediate valley, while skirmishers dashed on against the foe in all the gallant style for which the French are distinguished. At first the Russians took no notice of these proceedings; but when the skirmishers advanced to the edge of the underwood, and fired into the dismounted columns, they instantly sounded to horse, and drew up in battle array; at the same time that swarms of Cossacks rushed with loud shouts into the plain, sweeping the whole band of skirmishers before them in their course. It seemed as if a nest of infuriated hornets had been suddenly disturbed.

"Quick reinforcements from the brigade could now alone save the advanced troops. They were sent; but had no sooner turned the tide in favour of the French, than the Russians supported their parties, and again drove them back. Reinforcements now followed each other with great rapidity, and the irregular combat in the valley extended in proportion as the division on the height became every moment weaker and weaker. The French brigade already stood in single rank; the Poles and Prussians, who, to save their order from being en-

tirely broken, had detached more sparingly, were rather in better condition.

"In the wide plain the contending parties, mixed confusedly together, fought with constantly varying success; the momentary victors driving the vanquished across the field, till the fate of battle again turned pursuers into pursued, and gave the wild chase a totally opposite direction; the yells of the Cossacks swelling loudly above the ordinary tumult of combat.

"Darkness set in, and the needless and still-continued fray now began to excite alarm; for the Cossacks were more expert at personal contests than the French, who were thus obliged to reinforce their troops more extensively than the Russians; the latter retaining their order and formation almost unimpaired.

"To augment the difficulty, the only infantry attached to the division consisted of two battalions, not of French, but of Italian infantry; and they had fallen down exhausted in midway; nor had the artillery, on which the French depend so much even in their cavalry actions, been able to keep pace with our rapid march. More than half the division was already disorganised; and neither generals nor commanders knew how to break off the action, or arrest the farther progress of mischief. The flashes of fire-arms cast the only light on the scene of tumult, while the shouts of the combatants alone indicated the varying success of the adverse parties.

"In this dilemma two of our guns fortunately reached the ground, and, quickly unlimbering, threw a couple of howitzer shells at random into the midst of the fray. And never was a greater or more sudden change produced by two cannon-shot: the loud yells ceased instantly, the tumult sunk into silence, the Cossacks became absolutely mute, and both parties returned quietly

to the feeble remains of the regiments. The battle was at end."

According to Segur, Napoleon declared on entering Witebsk, that "the campaign of 1812 was ended; that he would rest there for the winter, organize Poland, reform the army, and finish the war in the following year." Other writers deny this, and endeavour to prove that a halt at this point was altogether impracticable. We are unable to decide between these conflicting assertions, but rather suppose that the Emperor had no very clear and well-defined intention on the subject; and that, whatever he might say, he acted as usual on the mere impulse of the moment. In the first instance, some rest was indispensably necessary, for the army was melting down rapidly; and the central corps, under his own command, had already lost upwards of 80,000 men, principally from sickness, few having fallen in action. Half the cavalry were dismounted, and the still remaining horses greatly reduced in strength. "Our horses have no patriotism," said General Nansouti to the King of Naples, who complained that a charge had not been executed with due energy. "Our soldiers may fight without bread, but the horses will do nothing without corn."

The cheerless aspect of the country, and the manner in which the war was now carried on, might also have given rise to reflection. Interminable pine forests extended in all directions, cultivation was rare, and the few villages and hamlets scattered in these wildernesses were found altogether deserted. At the approach of the invaders, the peasantry, terrified by the excesses committed, forsook their homes, and with their herds and moveables, sought shelter in the recesses of the surrounding woods. The soldiers, exasperated by want,

and to punish the fugitives, often set fire to these deserted habitations. At first this was as much, perhaps, the result of carelessness as of wantonness; but the Cossacks, never slow at learning such a mode of proceeding, soon reduced it to a regular system, and spared the French the trouble of laying waste the country, by burning every place they left on their retreat. That the inhabitants purposely set fire to their dwellings, to prevent them from giving shelter to the French, is a mere fable; as unfounded is the assertion, that the country was laid waste according to a regular system, and that the Cossacks acted by superior orders in thus burning the houses and villages as they passed. It resulted entirely from a disgraceful want of discipline, which both parties were afterwards sufficiently anxious to disavow: the French attempted to conceal the brigand conduct of their own troops, by ascribing the general devastation to a Scythian mode of warfare adopted by their enemies; and the Russians were ready enough to let the savage folly of their Tartar hordes pass on the world for a noble display of generous patriotism, when the result had given them the benefit of the wide-spread desolation.

"Whatever arrangements," says the Hussar, "may have been made for supplying the troops with provisions, they proved of no avail; for from the very outset of the campaign, the continued marches separated the army from their convoys, which were never seen again. The soldiers were obliged, therefore, to live on the produce of the country which they traversed; but as the necessities of the swarming hosts were far greater than these supplies could relieve, the want of provisions was already severely felt during the first days of the war. As to any regular issue of rations, it was never thought of after the

passage of the Niemen. Every one took what he could find, and lived as best he might. Whoever was exhausted fell down, remained where he lay, and was never inquired after. At first, the consequences of the evil were not so much thought of; a battle was universally expected, and all supposed that the minor considerations were sacrificed and obliged to give way before the greater and more important objects. That a system which, at the very commencement, exhibited such frightful consequences, would be persevered in to the last, was never dreamed of for a moment. When the army reached Wilna, famine was already raging in the ranks of the infantry, and many thousand cavalry horses had perished.

"The scanty cultivation of the country, and the general poverty of the inhabitants, made it impossible for the large masses of troops encamped together to find sufficient supplies, even when they wandered for miles around, which the short time allowed for rest seldom permitted. It was this total disproportion between supply and demand which ultimately destroyed the army. Other circumstances occasioned loss, and augmented the ruin; but they were of little consequence, and only derived force and influence from this great and overwhelming cause of evil. A soldier who is obliged to fast for three day on a march becomes, if an infantry man, a straggler; and if a trooper, he allows his horse to want, and is in both cases reduced to total inefficiency. The neighbourhood of the camps never furnished enough of forage for the cattle; and it almost seemed as if the cavalry had been assembled in such large masses during this war, for the mere purpose of being handed over to certain destruction."

The Imperial Guard still, as we find from Lossberg, presented a gallant appearance; and the high fame of

this celebrated corps warrants us in repeating the words in which a brave soldier mentions them.

"It was here," says the General, "that I first saw the Imperial Guard, and I shall certainly never forget the impression the Grenadiers, in particular, made upon me. Judged only by appearance, and I speak only of the impression their appearance made, I must say they are soldiers in the most perfect sense of the word. I may have seen troops of taller stature, but I never saw such a number of bearded, sun-burnt, and intelligent countenances assembled together. Many of the men did not exceed five feet six inches, but they atoned for their inferior height by well-set figures, and by strong, firm, muscular limbs. I saw these war-tried soldiers pass on an ordinary march, and had thus an opportunity of observing the perfect ease with which they moved, and the facility with which they carried their arms and appointment. To some extent they even reconciled me with bear-skin caps, the most absurd head-dress for soldiers, as there seemed to be a kind of harmony between the bronzed and bearded faces of the men, and the dark and rugged caps which they wore."

While the French were halting in their cantonments round Witebsk, the Russians were preparing for battle. The junction of the armies, the reinforcements received at Smolensk, had given rise to loud calls for a change in the conduct of the war: the court, the camp, the nation at large, were indignant at seeing the country abandoned to the enemy. Russian skill and bravery, it was said, would easily make up for the numerical superiority of the invaders; and the success of the flanking corps under Wittgenstein and Tormasow, who had gained advantages over Oudinot and Réynier, gave force to these clamorous demands. Barclay, though a cool, brave, and resolute

soldier, was a man of limited views, and did not see the certain victory that continued retreat would necessarily give him. He felt only the weight of national odium, which on one side was beginning to press heavily upon him for the conduct hitherto pursued; and on the other, the dreadful consequence which would result to the country from a serious defeat sustained in the field. And though it was known that the French had suffered great losses, the extent was not even conjectured. Without any very clearly defined views of his own, Barclay was the more easily influenced by the opinion of others; and as all declared for an offensive movement, he yielded, and resolved to attack the French in their cantonments. The invaders were scattered over a wide extent of country, and hopes were entertained that an effectual blow might be struck against some of the detached corps.

On the 8th of August, the Russians pushed forward to Molivo, and on the following morning, Count Platoff already surprised and defeated the French advanced guard under General Sebastiani: this was looked upon as a good omen, and the order which immediately afterwards arrested the forward movement, caused general dissatisfaction. The halt was occasioned by a report which described the French as on the march towards Projetsche; and this proving to be unfounded, the advance, after some days' delay, was again resumed. But the opportunity was lost—the French, aroused by the first demonstration, had assembled their corps, and were already in full march to execute the most unaccountable manœuvre ever undertaken in war. That it has been highly lauded is true; French, Russian, and German writers have been alike loud in its praise; but in the real style of modern military historians, no one has attempted to show in what its merit consists, and we

candidly confess our total inability to discover it: on the other hand, the great loss of time and men it occasioned to the invaders, when both were precious, is sufficiently evident.

Napoleon was anxious to attack the Russian army; they were on the right bank of the Dnieper, had left their camp on the shores of the lake of Kasplia, and advanced towards Rudnia; but instead of going to meet them on the direct road to Smolensk and Moscow, he took the direction of Orcha, crossed the Dnieper at Rasasna, and then ascended the left bank of the river towards the fortified part of Smolensk, the new part of the town on the right bank being unfortified, but commanding from its higher situation the old and fortified part. By this extraordinary manœuvre, he marched, as the sketch will show, along two sides of a triangle,

instead of one side; placed the fortress of Smolensk and the Dnieper between himself and the army he wished to attack; and sacrificed several days in useless movements, at a time when every day's march cost the army upwards of a thousand men! We have heard of armies, when on

the defensive, seeking to shelter themselves behind rivers and fortresses, but we never before heard of an assailant forcing these advantages on the assailed: it was first arming the bull with the horns, and taking him by the horns afterwards.

An action that took place during this circuitous march deserves to be noticed. The Russian General Newrowsky, who with 1200 cavalry and 6000 infantry was stationed at Krasnoe, about 25 miles from Smolensk, allowed himself to be attacked. The country is perfectly open, and Murat, with more than 30,000 horse and 20 brigades of artillery, was at hand; the Russian cavalry were dispersed, and the guns taken at the first onset: but notwithstanding all the efforts of this immense mass of French cavalry, the Russian infantry escaped to Smolensk, with the loss of eight hundred men; Newrowsky atoning nobly in his retreat for his previous carelessness.

As this combat has been frequently cited in favour of the opinion, that modern infantry can resist well-led cavalry on open plain, we shall here describe it on the authority of a distinguished cavalry officer who was himself present in the action. The reader will see at once that no tactical inference can be drawn from the occurrence.

"The French horsemen," says Count Bismark, "could only reach the plain through which the Russian infantry were now retiring, by crossing a marshy rivulet that traverses Krasnoe. The regiments extended a good deal to find the best places for clearing the obstacle, the squadrons forming and advancing at a trot as soon as they got through the pass. Murat was, as usual, the first, and this gallant king gave himself the signal for the unexampled confusion which distinguished the

action. Dressed in theatrical costume, with high plumes and a Spanish mantle of green velvet, richly embroidered in gold, he stationed himself on a slight elevation a little advance of Krasnoe ; and no sooner had a squadron cleared the pass and formed, than he pointed to the Russians, exclaiming, ' There is the enemy—charge firmly.' The leaders of squadrons, eager to signalize themselves under the eyes of the Commander-in-Chief of the whole cavalry, waited for no second order, tarried not for the commands of their own immediate superiors, but dashed instantly, at full speed, towards the hostile column. Generals and Colonels, not wishing to remain behind, accompanied the swarm without authority. Thus it was, that all regimental formation was lost here, even as the brigade formations had been lost in passing through and round Krasnoe. But worse was to follow.

" General Newrowsky, abandoned by his cavalry, deprived of his guns, had formed a close column, and moved slowly along by the side of the high road. He felt the necessity of continuing in march, and met the attack of the first squadron by a volley from the rear company of the column. But this fire soon ceased to be regular, extended quickly to the whole mass, and was continued without intermission ; every man firing as soon as he had loaded, and pretty well at random, for there were enemies in every direction : as the number of squadrons hurried forward to the attack augmented with every minute.

" But these irregular charges had no other effect than to break the formation of the squadrons, and to throw the cavalry into a state of confusion, of which there is fortunately no other example on record. It was in vain that superior officers endeavoured to reform the regiments : no one heard, no one obeyed. Tactics and discipline had lost their meaning, and order was at an end.

Eight brigades of horse-artillery had arrived, and followed the off-rolling chaos in the most perfect state of readiness; but all efforts on the part of the officers to obtain room enough to advance and unlimber were useless: no one heeded them.

"Marshal Ney, Duke of Elchingen, endeavoured to calm the King's impetuosity, and make him adopt some tactical arrangement. All in vain: Murat's impatience hurried him along, and taking counsel only from his bravery, foiled all the attempts of the Generals and Field-officers to restore order, by constantly calling out, 'Charge firmly,' '*chargez ferme.*' He was afraid that the time lost in making preparations for a regular attack would enable the enemy to escape.

"His fiery valour set the example, and led him into the midst of danger. But even the least regular attacks require unity of impulse, and this also was destroyed by the King's numerous staff-officers, who carried his unfortunate 'charge firmly' at full gallop to every part of the field. The consequence was, that while attacks were in progress on one point, they were retrograding on another, and that unity of command and of impulse were alike wanting.

"By degrees the regiments were thus completely mixed up together, till in the end they resembled only a vast horde of barbarous cavalry, totally unacquainted with either rule or discipline.

"In the meantime, the Russians had also lost their order, and now formed only a confused mass closely pressed together. But they continued their progress, moving slowly, like a stream of fire-pouring lava, through the plain. With the loss of about 800 men, gradually hewn away, so to express it, from the main body, they reached the second defile, where another division took them up.

and whence they gained Smolensk without farther molestation.

" Night now came on ; but it was late before the best exertions of the officers succeeded in assembling the troops, and restoring the necessary order.

" Brave and admirable as was the conduct of Newrowsky's division, they cannot claim the credit of having thrown the cavalry into confusion ; that was done by the French commander himself."*

Segur, who " talks so like a waiting-gentlewoman of guns and battles," says, that " the reports and flashes of musketry frightened the Würtemberg horses, and overthrew them *pêle mêle ;*" though he allows that the effect produced by the Russian fire was not considerable. *Monsieur* De Segur here falls into an error very common to those who are not conversant with military affairs, or he would have known that well-trained cavalry horses are not frightened by the fire of musketry, but that, like all other horses, when galloping in a body, they naturally animate and urge each other forward ; the men, on the contrary, when they neither know their strength nor duty, very often are frightened, and are, of course, willing enough to throw the blame on the horses, who cannot contradict them. The whole transaction adds but another instance to the many, in which the arm was wanting to the sword of Scanderbeg.

The march of the French to the left bank of the Dnieper was the most fortunate circumstance possible for General Barclay, who is described by Clausewitz " as completely bewildered at this time, between his dread of retiring without fighting, and his fear of the consequences of a battle ;" the opportunity which Napoleon

* Ideen-Tactik der Reuterei, von dem General Grafen, von Bismark.

here gave him of engaging in combat without being exposed to any risk of defeat was therefore embraced with alacrity.

General Rajewskoi had remained at Smolensk with the seventh Russian corps, so that when the French arrived before the place, they found it occupied in strength; a proof how greatly their writers misrepresent the case, when they assert that Napoleon's so-called splendid movement completely surprised the Russians, and nearly cut them off from the Moscow road.

The town of Smolensk is situated on the left bank of the Dnieper, and surrounded by an old-fashioned stone wall, flanked with towers; these defences are eighteen feet thick, and thirty feet high, and might be considered as perfectly secure against a mere *coup-de-main*. But as the town had never, in modern times, been looked upon as a military post, the works were out of repair, and feebly armed; a few guns only were mounted on the ramparts, the principal part of the artillery being distributed in a dilapidated citadel, and in some redoubts that covered the suburbs. Considered as a fortress capable of standing a siege, Smolensk possessed no strength whatever; but as a mere post, in which an inferior number of resolute soldiers could maintain a temporary combat with advantage against superior adversaries, it was strong; and as such, the Russians determined to defend it: three bridges thrown across the river ensured a retreat in case of disasters.

On the 16th of August Napoleon arrived before the walls of the city, at the same time that Barclay and Bagration were discovered advancing to its support on the right bank of the stream. The Emperor no sooner saw the Russian masses approaching, than he clapped his hands together, exclaiming with delight, "Now I

hold them fast:" really expecting what none but Napoleon would have expected, that his enemies intended to forego all the advantages he had himself given them, and cross the river on purpose to attack him upon open ground; he believed that 120,000 Russians were to file out from the narrow gates of Smolensk, with all their cavalry and artillery, and assail 180,000 French drawn up ready to overwhelm them as they should issue successively into the plain! Disappointed in this extravagant hope, he resorted to measures as reprehensible as those he had anticipated from his adversaries. Immediately on reaching Smolensk, Barclay de Tolly had detached Prince Bagration to Dorogobuj on the Moscow road, thus indicating a dread that the French would cross the river above the town and turn the Russian left, without running their heads against the stone walls of the "sacred city." The facility of this movement presented itself to officers of both armies; for as Smolensk was not a fortress, nor military point of any value, it was perfectly certain that the Russians would forsake it the moment they found their communication with Moscow threatened.

Napoleon, however, was determined to give them every advantage; and as they did not come out to fight on the morning of the 17th, he ordered the place to be attacked in the evening. The attempt to batter down part of the city wall with 36 twelve-pounders having failed, the combat was fought for the possession of the suburbs: it was extremely sanguinary, both armies witnessing the fray, and reinforcing their countrymen as occasion required. As night closed, the French were in possession of the disputed ground; but the town, which had caught fire during the action, still remained in the hands of the Russians.

General Lossberg, whose regiment joined the army about ten o'clock at night, thus describes the scene: "But how shall I describe the splendid but melancholy spectacle that burst upon our view! Picture to yourself a city of some twenty thousand inhabitants, with a number of churches and spires, standing in one blaze of fire before us. Countless watch-fires rising from the camps of four hundred thousand men, Russian and French, divided only by the Dnieper, added to the wildness of the spectacle. A close and continued combat was raging round the ramparts of the city, and hundreds of flaming missiles, thrown from howitzers and mortars, were constantly seen traversing the air on their fierce and deadly errands. The oldest officers declared, that they never witnessed so awful and imposing a sight.

"What most excited a soldier's feelings on the occasion, and I speak but of soldierly feelings, was the death-like stillness that reigned in the camp of the Guards, as well as in those of the other corps that, formed in close columns, extended in a vast semicircle round the plain. Never shall I forget the moment of our passing the imperial tent, whence an officer rushed out on our approach, and commanded silence, as the Emperor was sleeping. The voices of the soldiers were instantly hushed, and we moved along in perfect silence till we reached the extreme right of the army, where we are now encamped."

Barclay, satisfied with having fought a battle and sustained no defeat, recalled his troops during the night, and broke down the bridges: on the following morning the French took possession of the smoking ruins, which, though purchased by the lives of 10,000 valiant soldiers, afforded the victors no supplies of any kind, nor even shelter for the sick and wounded.

Smolensk, built of wood, like most Russian towns was set on fire by some howitzer shells thrown in during the action; but Napoleon, and the French generally, charged its destruction on the Russians, and complained very bitterly of the Scythian mode of warfare carried on against them; they really looked upon themselves as extremely ill used in the matter, and hardly allowed that the Russians had a right to defend their own country in their own way. To retire, burn the quarters, and destroy provisions, so as to leave the invaders neither food nor shelter, was evidently considered as something bordering upon foul play: according to these notions, the Russians were bound to fight, to be beaten and to sue for peace: and any deviation from these established rules was clearly held to be something very little short of treachery; and if none of Napoleon's advocates assert this in plain words, they evidently wish the reader to understand it nevertheless.

On the evening of the 18th, the Russians resumed their retreat; but as the first part of the road leading from Smolensk to Moscow runs close to the bank of the

river, and was thus exposed to the fire of the batteries of the opposite side, Barclay resolved for greater security to march, not only by night, but to make a circuitous movement by Gorbunovo and Iabino, and fall into the main road at Valutino Gora and Lubino. But the difficulty of moving large bodies of troops in the dark, and particularly by cross-roads, was here again rendered apparent. The columns opened out, and were retarded in their progress; some lost the right direction, and the rear division, on clearing the wood at day-break, still found itself close to Smolensk, and perceived the French advancing slowly along the Moscow road; the very arc of the chord round which the Russians were marching.

In this trying situation, and when absolute ruin seemed impending over the army, Barclay de Tolly evinced distinguished promptness and resolution. Firmness, bravery, and coolness in action, formed the brighter traits of his military character, and these were here displayed to the greatest advantage. Seeing the threatened danger, he led the nearest division forward against the advancing enemy; fought stubborn combats at Gedeonovo and Valutino Gora, and maintained his ground till the other corps, having cleared the wood and assembled behind the Stragan rivulet, were in position to receive battle. He then fell back, followed by the French, who, under Murat, Ney, and Davoust, attacked the new position in great force. The Russian ground was strong, and bravely defended, and it was only at nightfall, and after a great loss had been sustained, that the assailants gained possession of the corpse-covered field;—the fruitless and only trophy of this dearly purchased victory.

French writers ascribe the unsatisfactory result of the battle of Valutino Gora, as it is termed, to the miscon-

duct of the Duke of Abrantes, who disobeyed the Emperor's orders. This officer had crossed the Dnieper at Pruditchi, and, to judge from the map, certainly was in position to have turned the left of the Russians. But if duty was not done, it was in a great measure Napoleon's own fault; for he had remained at Smolensk, and was not present in the action to give orders, which, coming directly from him, could not have been disobeyed; though his princes and marshals often, we are told, sacrificed the general interest to their mutual jealousies.

His absence from a stern combat of many hours' duration, that cost the lives of 10,000 of his soldiers, and was fought within less than half-an-hour's canter of his quarters, seems to imply a cold or callous apathy of heart, exceeding every power of description. Such indifference to the fate of brave men would be in the highest degree reprehensible on the part of an ordinary general, whose duty would command him to watch over the fortunes of the soldiers intrusted to his care, and see that they were neither risked in useless combats, nor exposed to loss for want of proper support, that might be within call; and if neglect of this duty would be dishonourable in an ordinary commander, it was doubly so on the part of a crowned soldier, who owed every thing —name, fame, throne, and power—to the valour of his troops. The thunder of artillery, rolling peal after peal from the field of Valutino, told Napoleon that torrents of blood were flowing in his cause; but the sound, though it fell upon his ear, could not make one fibre of that dull heart vibrate with generous emotions, or urge him on to make one effort or exertion in the cause. of his devoted followers: we do not see how disgraceful apathy could

be carried further; and yet he has been called active and energetic.

Napoleon was anxious to bring the Russians to battle: his whole plan of operation—if he can be said to have had one—was founded on the hope of striking a blow at their army; achieving a victory that should intimidate the Emperor as well as his people. Here was the fairest possible opportunity for striking such a blow. Fortune seemed almost willing to deliver his enemies into his hands; but there was no one present to receive the brilliant gift: the leader of armies was dictating bulletins, while the soldiers were fighting bootless and sanguinary battles.

And now, let us ask, what were the results of the boasted movement to the left bank of the Dnieper? 1. Ten thousand men lost in the unsuccessful attack upon the fortified part of Smolensk, which, if approached by the unfortified side, would have fallen without causing a shot to be fired: 2. Ten thousand men sacrificed in the useless battle of Valutino; and, 3. Several days thrown away in the circuitous march by Rasasna, at a moment when men and time were alike precious, and when every day's march cost the army a thousand men, independent of the loss sustained in battle.

The swarms of stragglers that followed the main body of the army actually formed an army of themselves: they are thus mentioned by the Prussian Hussar, who, having lost his horse, was for some days thrown in among them.

"The host of stragglers that augmented in proportion as the army diminished, was composed of men who, unable to keep pace with their regiments, had fallen to the rear; of others who had been detached and could not overtake their corps, as well as of strong foraging

parties, that, having been sent to a distance from the main road to collect provisions, were unable to come up with their regiments and divisions, owing to the rapid and continued marches of the main body. After the battle of Borodino, that proved so fatal to the cavalry, vast numbers of dismounted horsemen also joined the heterogeneous mass.

"In general, the army of stragglers followed the main body in societies of from three to ten in number, who endeavoured to make their way as best they could in the small carriages of the country, called *tuleikas*, or on the *koniaks*, the ponies formerly mentioned. As the bonds of discipline were slackening every day, this safer and more convenient mode of journeying also tempted many soldiers to leave the ranks and augment our straggling bands.

"The mixture of all uniforms and all arms, of men of all nations, ranks, classes, and conditions, thus hurrying confusedly along, often presented scenes that could not fail to be diverting, notwithstanding the want that pressed so heavily upon us. Though the costumes were no doubt in a very indifferent plight, they were yet highly respectable compared to those that came into fashion during the retreat. The cause of this was evident. As the weather was still moderate, the old uniforms afforded sufficient protection, and the cravings of hunger made the soldiers turn all their attention to the search for provisions. But when the frost set in, and rendered warmer clothing necessary, we saw the most fantastic and extravagant costumes ever beheld spring up at once, as if by magic, and suddenly become universal in the army.

"One peculiarity of the stragglers was, that none of them, whether belonging to cavalry or infantry, would

travel on foot, a circumstance that rendered horse-stealing universal; and whoever lost sight of his horse, even for a single moment, was sure to lose it, without the least chance of recovering it in the constantly moving mass. To steal a horse was not considered a very heinous offence, and rather looked upon in the light that poaching is in some countries, than a dishonourable larceny; and the thief generally considered, that in seizing upon a good steed, he was only avenging his own loss or that of some comrade. Conscience, it must be confessed, sat lightly in these times on most of the martial fraternity.

"To prevent a stolen horse or pony from being recognised by its former possessor, the first thief generally cut off the animal's tail, the second hogged the mane, and the third cropped its ears. All this gave the ponies a rather odd appearance, but rendered it difficult for any one to recognise them after the process; though it was easy to see how often they had changed masters, by the various operations they had undergone.

"Want pressed heavily on the stragglers, and whoever was unable to forage at a distance from the high-road was in a melencholy predicament, and had no other alternative but to resort to horse-flesh, which was in abundance. The country was thinly-peopled and poorly cultivated, and had been traversed first by the Russian and then by the French army, so that little remained for the stragglers. And it was only the hope of finding abundance in the capital, which we were now approaching, that made the sick and feeble exert their last remaining strength to reach this haven of fancied safety."

The able and distinguished historian of the "Wars in Europe" believes that Smolensk was the point where the scales of Napoleon's fortunes turned; he thinks with many other writers, that the French could have halted

on the Dnieper, reformed their army, organised Poland, and resumed operations at the commencement of the fine season,—"sought peace at Moscow in summer," as Napoleon expressed it, "if it did not seek them in their quarters during the winter." We cannot agree in this view of the case; and though no measures could have led to results more disastrous than those which followed, it is not likely that success could have been attained or signal defeat avoided, by remaining on the Dnieper.

The flanking corps under St Cyr and Schwarzenberg had, indeed, maintained their ground, and even gained some advantages; but these were of too transient a character to have produced the least influence on the general result of operations; and their strength, like the strength of the main army, was melting rapidly away under the pressure of famine and disease. In the south, Admiral Tchitchagoff was already in march with the Moldavian army, for the purpose of joining General Tormasow, and in the north, General Steinhel had arrived with the Finland army at Riga, and was preparing to join General Wittgenstein on the Düna. On both flanks, the balance was turning steadily against the French. Had they remained at Smolensk, they would soon have been encompassed by the troops of Wittgenstein and Tchitchagoff, harassed by swarms of Cossacks, and confined to poor quarters, cut off from supplies and reinforcements, and obliged, while diminishing daily from the effects of famine and disease, to confront the constantly augmenting army of Barclay de Tolly, by which they were held at bay; and all this under the rigours of a Russian winter, and in countries totally incapable of furnishing provisions for such vast multitudes, already in want of every thing. This doomed host was not only destitute of food for the men and forage for the

horses, but of medicines for the sick, and bandages for the wounded; and the French hospitals of Wilna, Witebsk, and Smolensk, already presented the most frightful spectacles at which humanity ever shuddered.

It appears from the best statistical accounts of Russia, that the provinces traversed by the invading army contain, on an average, about fifty inhabitants to the square mile, a proof that no one district could possibly maintain 180,000 men, besides their followers, even for the shortest period: the locust swarm that devours regions in its progress, naturally deprives itself of all permanent resting place.

It is probable, also, that political considerations would have prevented Napoleon from halting at Smolensk, had he ever entertained an idea so completely at variance with his usual method of war. Germany interposed between him and France, and was too hostilely disposed to be depended upon, should he allow his army to be arrested by a Russian winter on the distant Dnieper. The Spanish war was still in progress, and events proved that the new dynasty was too feebly rooted in France to admit of its head remaining long at any great distance from the seat of government. All these considerations would naturally urge Napoleon forward, and make him adopt the measures he might think best suited for bringing the contest to an early conclusion; and it is perfectly evident, indeed, that from first to last he only speculated on a victory and the capture of Moscow, which, in his opinion, would ensure a peace: he calculated on the feebleness of his enemies; and that foundation failing, he remained without a single resource.

As the French army was now melting rapidly away, at the same time that the Russians were receiving rein-

forcements, the sanguinary combats of Smolensk and Valutino, in which the invaders had sacrificed vast numbers of men without profit, were necessarily of greater advantage to the defenders than to the assailants. But these advantages were far from satisfying Barclay and the staff of the army, who all felt that a heavy responsibility rested upon them, for relinquising so large a portion of the empire,—for approaching Moscow itself, —without first trying the fate of arms in a well-fought field.

It was resolved, therefore, to accept battle in the first good position that could be discovered on the Moscow road; but here fortune again interposed, and turned to the advantage of the Russians circumstances that would in most cases have tended more to the ruin than to the benefit of troops. Barclay de Tolly was not the commander-in-chief of the whole army, he only commanded the first army of the West, and, as minister of war, had perhaps some influence over the other corps, but no direct authority; and Prince Bagration, who commanded the second army, though his junior as a general, was not under his orders, and still retained his independent command. On the junction of the armies, the prince had, indeed, expressed his willingness to serve under Barclay; but this voluntary obedience could not always be depended upon, and differences had already occurred. Colonel Toll, the Quartermaster-General, who preceded the army, and took up the ground they had to occupy, had, as he thought, discovered an excellent position at Uswiate, in front of Dorogobuj, which seemed to meet with general approbation, till Prince Bagration arrived, who objected to it entirely; and Barclay, rather than try the extent of his uncertain authortity, consented to fall back next day,

and occupy a position which the Prince declared to be almost unassailable. When examined it proved, however, to be totally unsuitable, so that the retreat had to be again continued. Then came the news that General Milaradowitch was rapidly advancing with a reinforcement of 15,000 men; and as the propriety of awaiting the arrival of so large a force could hardly be doubted, the army fell back to give him the meeting. On the 29th of August, a position was at last found at Giatsh, which all seemed to think well adapted to a battle; but on that day Prince Kutusoff arrived and assumed the chief command, and wishing naturally to acquire some knowledge of his army before leading them into action, continued to retreat.

Though, in the first instance, no one in the Russian army had ventured to speculate on the shape which a campaign carried on with such immense means, and on so vast a theatre of war, would assume; its ultimate results were now becoming gradually apparent, breaking in more distinct forms through the misty clouds which had overshadowed, but not concealed them from the view of enlightened observers. At the commencement of the war, the well-known Colonel Scharnhorst clearly foretold that the French would be destroyed if they followed the retiring Russians far into the centre of the empire, without intimidating the Emperor Alexander into submission.

Count Lieven, who had been Russian Ambassador at Berlin, and very intimate with Scharnhorst, spoke of such a retreat into the interior of the empire when he joined the Czar in the camp at Drissa; several of the German officers with the army endeavoured to bring the same idea into vogue, but it was treated as an

"exaggeration little deserving of notice." Chance, however, had carried it into effect, and now the results were appearing. The Russians, well supplied it would seem, suffered no loss except from the casualties of the field, and these were made good by the reinforcements on which they were daily falling back; whereas the French were dwindling down faster and faster the farther they advanced: the strength of the parties was rapidly coming to the same level, and was certain at no distant period to turn completely against the invaders. Still Napoleon followed quickly on the traces of his enemies, and though his numbers diminished, the confident presumption of the host was not lessened.

"What shall we find between this and Moscow?" was the question asked by a French general of a Russian officer, who had come with a flag of truce to the French head-quarters. "Pultowa," was the quick and soldier-like answer given to the inquiry, rude, we suppose, from habitual presumption rather than from intention. But though Pultowa lay not yet in the track of the invaders, a stern and sanguinary combat already awaited them.

Field-marshal Kutusoff had, very unexpectedly as we have seen, assumed the command of the army; he had been appointed in consequence of the wavering and uncertain measures of Barclay, who had become extremely unpopular, was looked upon as almost a foreigner, and considered as too much under the influence of the foreign staff-officers. Kutusoff, on the contrary, was a regular old Russian, a sort of Suvaroff, on a small scale indeed, who was expected soon to remove all the foreign influence so injurious to the good Muscovite cause, and was therefore received with great satisfaction by the whole army.

This commander, now turned of seventy, had been a gallant soldier in his younger days, but was greatly broken by age, and wanted even the degree of strength and activity not unfrequently seen in military men at that advanced period of life. In personal activity he was far below Barclay ; in talents and sagacity, however, he was his superior. Cunning and dissimulation generally adhere to men even in the latest periods of life, and they had not forsaken Kutusoff ; he was besides well acquainted with the Russian character, and certainly made the best use of his knowledge. He boasted incessantly, not only of what would be done, but of what had been done ; proclaimed victory where reverses had been sustained ; and what was now easy, perhaps, foretold with certainty the speedy destruction of the French : his very extravagance supported the hopes and spirit of the people, which would have been crushed by the honesty of Barclay, who, desponding to the last, would have intimidated others. Kutusoff laboured, however, under the great disadvantage of having lost the decisive battle of Austerlitz against Napoleon : the recollection of that terrible defeat still pressed upon his mind ; and it is certain that he would not have fought at Borodino, seeing that victory was certain without a battle, had not the army, the country, and the government, all demanded that an appeal should be made to arms, before the time-honoured capital of the empire was resigned into the hands of vaunting enemies. Kutusoff resolved to stand the fight accordingly.

At the village of Borodino, seventy miles west of Moscow, a small streamlet called the Kolotcha crosses the high road leading to the capital, and flowing to the left falls into the Moskwa, a river nowhere fordable in

the immediate vicinity. From Borodino to the Moskwa, the right banks of the streamlet are sufficiently high and

commanding to afford a good position to the right wing of an army drawn up to defend the approach to Moscow; but from the village to the wood of Utiza, about two miles distant in the opposite direction, and which presents the only *appui* to the left of an army posted for this purpose, the ground breaks into a succession of elevations rarely exceeding twenty feet in height, and covered occasionally with brushwood, offering nothing capable of distinctly marking, still less of strengthening a line of defence. The wood here mentioned is in many places marshy, and though not impassable, forms an

obstacle of some difficulty to the movement of troops. At the distance of four miles from Borodino, it is traversed by the old road from Smolensk to Moscow; and an army drawn up at the forenamed village to resist an enemy advancing by the new road, is therefore obliged to occupy this old road also, to avoid having its left flank completely turned. From the first verges of the wood to the banks of the Moskwa, the distance by Borodino is about five miles.

On this ground, selected by Colonel Toll, the Quartermaster-general, the Russians determined to await the onset of Napoleon. The troops entered the position on the 3d of September; and as the French delayed for two days around the burning ruins of Giatz and Wiasma, it was not till the evening of the 5th that they came in sight of the expectant foes. A Russian post, stationed near the village of Schewardino, rather more than a mile in front of the left wing, was immediately attacked and driven back. In their retreat, the defeated troops evacuated a redoubt, situated on a hill round which they had been formed, and which Count Segur and other French writers describe as having been stormed after the most extravagant prodigies of valour, though it had never even been assailed. It is well for the honour of the French army, that the high and noble gallantry of its soldiers rests upon better authority than on the idle tales of its military historians.

During the morning of the 6th, Napoleon reconnoitred the Russian army. He found them posted on the ground already described: their right covered by the Kolotcha, and slightly thrown back towards the Moskwa: the centre behind Borodino, extending from the village of Gorki to the ruined hamlet of Semenoskaya: the left, also a little thrown back, reaching from this last point

to the wood of Utiza. From Gorki to the left, some slightly constructed field works covered different points of the position; but these redoubts were without palisades or *abatis*, were all open behind, and raised on a light and sandy soil, so feebly marked, that even horsemen could pass the ditch and clear the parapet: one of the redoubts between Gorki and Semenoskaya was of considerable size, and armed with twenty pieces of artillery.

The old road to Moscow was occupied by General Tutchkoff with a corps of 15,000 men, composed in great part of newly-raised militias. As it was concluded that the French would endeavour to turn the left of the Russian position in this direction, he was kept very far back—out of sight so to express it—for the purpose of falling upon the right flank of any French corps that should attempt the movement. The idea was not undeserving of praise; but Tutchkoff's division was too feeble to admit of its being carried fully into effect. The extent of front occupied by the Russians did not much exceed four miles, as Colonel Toll was a decided advocate for close and compact formations: but however advantageous these may be, care must be taken not to overcrowd a position, or expose the reserves to the fire of the enemy. Here both errors were committed; the reserves and second lines were too near the front, and the vast number of guns brought into the field augmented the difficulties and increased the losses, to which the multitudes necessarily became exposed.

The French, who collected their principal forces opposite to the left wing and centre of the Russians, were equally crowded. They counted 130,000 men, the nerves and sinews of the army still present round their eagles, and had 587 pieces of artillery in their train.

Including 10,000 Cossacks, the Russian forces amounted to 120,000 men, provided with 640 pieces of artillery. Considering the strength of the armies, the disparity of numbers was no longer of much consequence; but the greater practice, experience, and confidence of the French officers and soldiers, seemed to leave little chance of victory to the Russians, who had comparatively slight practice of war, were led by a defeated General, and by officers who all looked upon Napoleon as a military genius of the highest order. How far he justified this reputation at Borodino has now to be examined: his dispositions for the battle were as follows.

The right wing of the Russians being strongly posted, was left entirely unassailed, and became a reserve for supporting the other troops engaged. The Viceroy of Italy, with about 40,000 men, was destined to attack Borodino, and the centre of the enemy; Ney, Davoust, and some of Murat's cavalry, also about 40,000 strong, were to fall on the Russian left wing under Bagration; the Guard, with the 8th corps, and the remainder of the cavalry, in all 40,000 more, remained in reserve; while Poniatowsky with 10,000 men advanced by the old Moscow road, and turned the left of the enemy. Thus the very remnant of this mighty host could still be divided into powerful armies; and in the very centre of Russia they outnumbered the defenders of the soil, gathered from all parts of the boundless empire to guard the capital of the Czars!

Two rather curious circumstances occurred to Napoleon the day before the battle. A messenger brought him the portrait of his son, the young King of Rome, which he caused to be displayed in front of the tent, to gratify the curiosity of the officers and soldiers of the guard, who came in crowds to behold the pictured image of the

youthful prince. "Take it away," said the father at last, "he looks at too early an age on a field of battle." Those who record this poor piece of affected sentimentality as a proof of emotion and deep feeling, forget to tell us who prepared the frightful scenes of slaughter which a portrait was not even allowed to look upon.

The other incident to which we have alluded, was the arrival of Colonel Fabvier, aide-de-camp to Marmont, who brought the unwelcome news of the victory gained by the British at Salamanca. Segur says, that the Emperor bore the unfortunate tidings with temper and firmness: Gourgaud, who was probably better informed, denies this, and tells us that he was very angry, and found great fault with the defeated Marshal for having compromised the French army merely to gratify his own personal ambition: it was rather a strange cause of displeasure for Napoleon to urge at such a moment. The arrival of these disastrous news, exactly at this time, had something of an ominous appearance. The glory of his most hated foes rose before him even on the banks of the distant Moskwa; the intelligence of their exploits was certain to animate the exertions of his immediate opponents, and urge them on to follow the gallant example; and the blows struck by the British on the banks of the Tormes, were already to tell against him at the very gates of Moscow.

During the night, the following proclamation was drawn up, and ordered to be read in the morning at the head of every company:—"Soldiers," said this document, "here is the battle you have so long wished for; victory now depends upon yourselves, and is necessary to us: it will ensure us plenty, good winter quarters, and a speedy return to our country. Behave as you did at Austerlitz, Friedland, Witebsk, and Smolensk, and let remote posterity speak with pride of your conduct

on this day. Let it be said of you, he was at the great battle fought under the walls of Moscow." There was certainly more of candour, and less of tinsel and bombast than usual in this proclamation: the promise held out to the troops was not, however, fulfilled; they conquered as they were desired, but so incapable had been the measures of their leader, that victory brought only destruction to the victors.

At five o'clock on the morning of the 7th, Napoleon took his station in front of the redoubt captured two days before; and when he saw the sun rise, clear and bright above the horizon, he pointed to it with the exclamation, "There is the sun of Austerlitz!" All being ready, the troops, in high spirits, expecting that victory would end their sufferings and privations, Poniatowsky was ordered to advance; and at six o'clock, the opening of the batteries directed against the left and centre of the Russians, gave the signal for action.

Marshals Ney and Davoust moved against the left of the enemy; and the Viceroy, after carrying Borodino, —a post too far advanced to exercise any influence on the progress of the action,—attacked the centre and the large redoubt by which it was covered. The fire now spread rapidly, and became heavy and destructive. The narrow front on which so many thousands fought, caused the combatants to be closely pressed together; and every ravine, hollow, or broken piece of ground that offered shelter to the infantry, was filled with crowds of skirmishers. Column after column advanced in compact order to the attack; but, broken by the fire and the inequalities of the ground, they soon opened out, and only augmented the *tirailleurs'* swarms that assumed the appearance of deep and confused lines—pouring out a close and deadly fire against the equally compressed

masses of the Russians, who, fighting bravely, returned shot for shot, and made terrible havoc in the ranks of the assailants. From every commanding point, the numerous artillery of both parties hurled destruction around ; and at an early hour, the cavalry were already drawn into action.

It was between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, and though great loss had already been sustained, the French had made no impression on any part of the line : none of the redoubts had yet been carried. We shall, therefore, while the action is thus in suspense, take a look at the two commanders as they have been represented by credible witnesses who approached them during the conflict.

Napoleon had stationed himself nearly a mile from the scene of action, and is represented as sitting, or walking slowly up and down in front of the redoubt captured on the 5th ; he is described as using no personal exertion of any kind, seeming dull, heavy, and distressed, indifferent to the progress of the action, and only making signs of melancholy resignation whenever tidings reached him that any of his favourite officers had fallen. Segur ascribes this apathy to illness ; but the existence of such a cause is denied by other writers ; and it is certain that the Emperor was perfectly well during the remainder of the campaign, and for many years afterwards. Besides, any man possessing mind enough to exercise influence over the earthly mould of his composition, must have been aroused from a mere passing indisposition by a battle in which thousands were falling in his very cause. But this heavy and dull inactivity agrees perfectly well with the description we have given of his conduct on other occasions, and seems, as we shall show, to have been in full accordance with his real character. Between three and four o'clock he went,

according to Pelet's account, to reconnoitre the redoubt of Gorki, and became exposed to its fire; but at this time the action had almost ceased.

Kutusoff, though present in the battle fought by his army, does not appear to have acted a more energetic part. Stationed in front of Gorki, he listened, says Clausewitz, "to the reports made to him, like one who did not exactly know where his head was." In reply to any information communicated, he answered, "Very good, very well:" to any measure proposed, he generally assented with the words, "Do so."

This passive sanctioning of whatever others recommended, led to what has been termed the offensive movement attempted by the Russians. Count Platoff having crossed the Kolotcha, in front of the right wing of the Russian army, was surprised to find the ground totally unoccupied, and the left flank of the French perfectly open, and liable, as he thought, to be assailed with effect. He sent the Prince of Hesse Philipsthal, a young, enthusiastic, and inexperienced officer, to report this discovery: the Prince persuaded the Quartermaster-general, who stated the case to the Field Marshal, recommending that the first corps of cavalry, commanded by General Uvaroff, and which had not yet been engaged, should be despatched to strike this decisive blow. "Very well; take them," was the reply of Kutusoff: and 2500 horsemen were despatched to turn the flank of a powerful army, that had all its reserves still perfectly disposable. Fortunately for the Russians, however, Uvaroff's corps came upon ground that prevented them from acting. After traversing the Kolotcha near its junction with the Moskwa, they wheeled to the left, and soon found themselves arrested by the marshy rivulet of Borodino, which proved totally im-

passable for horsemen, and beyond which they easily distinguished heavy masses of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, drawn up in perfect readiness to make front wherever danger might threaten. Uvaroff's movement, though unattended with direct success, had the advantage of arresting for a time the advance of the Viceroy.

While the Russians were attempting to strike this feeble blow at the left of the French, the latter were equally unsuccessful in their efforts to turn the left wing of the Russians. Poniatowsky, in advancing along the old Moscow road, fell in with General Tutchkoff's division, and was prevented from effecting his flank movement. The eighth corps, under Junot, was afterwards sent to his assistance; but even the two combined were not able to accomplish the purpose: they obliged the Russians to retire indeed, but did not venture to traverse the wood and take the main army in reverse, so that Napoleon's object here was completely foiled.

On the principal battle-field, however, the balance was already turning in his favour. The combat long continued to rage in the manner above described: on both sides heavy losses were sustained. The Saxon cuirassier brigade, the finest body of horse in the army, broke and trampled under hoof several squares of Russian infantry. Murat's French cavalry following the success, passed the redoubts which were found to be open at the gorges, entered the works and sabred the artillery men, even at their very guns. Undismayed, the Russian masses advanced upon the victorious horsemen; and these, disordered by toil and losses, and unable to defend intrenchments, were forced to resign their conquests, to be again attacked and recaptured by additional assailants.

The final capture of the great redoubt between Gorki and Semenoskaya, formed the last important feature of

the battle. The work had resisted every effort, and armed with a numerous artillery of heavy calibre, its fire made fearful ravages in the French ranks: it was now to be taken at any price. The King of Naples and the Viceroy prepared to attack it from different quarters; and General Caulaincourt, leading the onset with the second corps of cavalry, was ordered to pass between the redoubt itself and Semenoskaya, overthrow the troops stationed for its defence, and then take the work in reverse. Farther to the left, the divisions of Broussier, Morand, and Gerard, were to advance and support the attack.

The young and enthusiastic Caulaincourt executed his task in gallant style. At the head of the cuirassiers of Wathier he passed beyond the redoubt, then wheeling to the left, threw himself into the work which he entered by the gorge. This was, however, the brave soldier's last feat of arms: he fell in the captured intrenchment; and the cuirassiers, exposed to the heavy fire of Osterman's division, unable to establish themselves on the high ground, were driven from the conquered post, and fiercely pursued by the Russian cavalry.

The Saxon cuirassiers now approached the work already drenched with the blood of so many gallant men. These regiments had only joined on the previous day, and having come by the Minsk road, had suffered less from want than the troops composing the main body of the army, and were comparatively in high condition. An officer of Napoleon's staff now brought them an express order to take the redoubt; nor were they slow in obeying. They had already been engaged, and sustained a heavy loss; but nothing checked the ardour of soldiers who believed that the honour of terminating this great battle, of conquering a peace and safe return to their native land, now devolved upon their exertions. The advance

was sounded, and the Life Guards instantly pressed up the hill, though round and grape ploughed the ground at every step. The ascent gained, these daring horsemen dashed at the redoubt, and as the heavy and long continued fire had in a great measure levelled the sandy breast-work, Lieutenant Minkwitz leapt his horse across the ditch, and entered the work sword-in-hand, followed by the leading squadrons of the regiment. Part of the garrison fled, the rest made a stout resistance, and were mostly cut down at their guns.

But the deadly struggle was not yet to cease. Russian troops again came forward to recover the very bulwark of their position; and a new and desperate conflict again ensued. Many Russian soldiers who had thrown themselves down to escape the sabres of the cuirassiers sprung up and resumed their arms, while the pressure of their assailing countrymen became every moment heavier and heavier; and the Saxons, though aided by a regiment of Polish cuirassiers, found themselves too weak to offer permanent resistance. The two regiments of carbineers, the flower of the French cavalry, were unable to change the fate of battle, and were forced to give way. With the last remnants of strength, the Saxons still maintained the contest round the redoubt: but they were on the point of yielding, when a regiment of infantry arrived from the left in double quick time; another and another followed; the Viceroy himself arriving with the 9th and 39th, with which he turned the intrenchment. The Russian General Likazew, who, during the last confused scene of carnage, had again forced his way into the redoubt, was taken prisoner, covered with wounds, after all his men had been cut down. Three general officers fell in this work during the battle.

Grouchy's corps of cavalry attempted to pursue the

enemy and complete the victory; but they were soon arrested by the cavalry of the Russian Guard, who being quickly supported by other troops, maintained the ground till their countrymen were again formed beyond the ravine of Gortiskoi, whence they once more opened a heavy fire of artillery on the French.

The redoubts were taken; the centre of the Russian army had lost some ground, and their left wing was considerably thrown back. This success enabled the assailants to establish themselves on the level plain, on ground more favourable to their action; and gave them a prospect, if they could now rout their adversaries, of cutting off their retreat and driving them back upon the Moskwa. But as the Russians remained unbroken, and defended the new ground they had taken with stubborn resolution, it was only by a vigorous effort that they could be dislodged, and the victory rendered decisive. The troops of Ney and Davoust were, however, no longer equal to such an exploit; and as Napoleon refused to support them with his Guard, the action ceased altogether about four o'clock in the evening;—the right wing of the Russians continuing on the ground they had held in the morning, the centre and left being thrown obliquely to the rear.

"From the place where we were stationed," says Clausewitz, speaking of the termination of this murderous combat, "we could plainly see the progress of the battle, and how it gradually marked the exhausted state and sinking strength of the combatants. The infantry masses had melted down to a third of their original number; the rest were killed, wounded, carrying away the wounded, or reforming in the rear. On all points, wide openings had taken place. More than a thousand guns had been brought into action, but the roar of artillery had died away: only single shots were now heard

at intervals; and even these sounded hollow and hoarsely, and had lost the sharp tone that marked their thunder at the commencement of the battle. On most points, the cavalry occupied the places of the infantry, and executed their charges at a slow and heavy trot, dragging their cumbrous and fatigued swarms from right to left; hostile parties driving each other away from redoubts which neither had sufficient strength to maintain.

"Towards three o'clock it became evident that the battle was at its last gasp, and that victory would, as usual, remain with those who had the best trump left, or strongest reserves to bring forward. This we could not see; but the tidings brought us were by no means discouraging, which was rather surprising, as the centre had evidently lost some ground. At three o'clock, General Uvaroff was recalled, and ordered to take up his former position, and at four we resumed our station behind Gorki."

"Though the Russians still thought themselves entitled to look upon the battle as a drawn one, and spoke a good deal about maintaining the field, which was not indeed entirely lost—of withholding victory, by firmness and perseverance, from foes so greatly exhausted as the French were; it was nevertheless clear, that the result could no longer be doubtful, and that the sagacious Kutusoff was fully resolved on the measures he had to pursue. During the ten-hours' combat, the balance had not altogether maintained its level; but had sunk markedly to the disadvantage of the Russians; and the French superiority, which was already felt before the action, was now greatly augmented by their having lost fewer men than their adversaries. The army was still in good order, and might be withdrawn in safety; and Kutusoff therefore resolved to fall back during the night, and it was certainly the best resolution that could have

been adopted." We have given this last extract from one of the most intelligent officers who ever wrote on military affairs, and who was evidently in the confidence of Colonel Toll, an officer of the highest influence on the staff of the Russian army, to show how very slender had been the victory achieved by the French in this murderous combat. But if the advantages gained were slight, the losses sustained were appalling: nearly 80,000 men had fallen, the greater proportion on the side of the Russians—a greater number than modern arms had ever before struck down in one battle-field; and causing in proportion even a far heavier amount of suffering than is usually inflicted by the hand of war, at all times from necessity cruel and unrelenting. Most of the wounded perished: the Russians, in the flames that consumed Mojaisk and Moscow; the French, in the huge charnel-house of Kolotskoi, a vast monastery, in which the maimed and mangled sufferers were heaped together, and left almost without food, medicines, or bandages, to die victims of every imaginable species of agony.

And what were the trophies gained to the victors by the torrents of blood thus shed, and by the maddening tortures inflicted upon so many thousands? A few hundred yards of gore-steeped battle-ground, thirty-four pieces of artillery, mostly dismounted, and 800 prisoners; and even against these insignificant trophies, the vanquished had a balance to show; for they had captured ten guns, and taken several hundred prisoners. On the side of the French, nine General officers were slain, and twenty-four wounded; the Russians lost Prince Bagration, and many other officers of rank. Great bravery had been displayed by both parties on this occasion; but it is in vain that we look for proofs of military talent or genius, evinced by the leaders in the conduct of the

battle : it was from first to last a frightful scene of slaughter, in which the gallantry and constancy of the combatants decided every thing, the skill of the leaders nothing. Napoleon attacked the Russians in a position that lent them no additional strength ; his army was superior to theirs in numbers, experience, and habits of war, and was certainly not inferior in bravery ; and yet, with such advantages, this so-called great military genius could achieve no success over his adversaries proportionate even to the numerical superiority with which he assailed them. As at Wagram, the victory was a slight and gradual turning of the balance in favour of the stronger party : death was on both occasions the only real conqueror—his were the undisputed trophies of those blood-stained fields ; and never before had civilized men offered such gory sacrifices at his fatal shrine.

" The exhausted troops," says our Hussar, " were led back to their cheerless camps, where nothing was to be found. Provisions, forage, straw, were all wanting ; and to search for them in the dark, and where whole armies had been assembled for days together, was a hopeless case indeed. The victors were almost in despair ; and though some looked for provisions, and others brought a little wet hay from our former bivouac, most of the men having secured their horses, wrapt themselves in their cloaks, and lay down in utter hopelessness. To augment their sufferings, a cold rain fell during the night."

" In the morning, the army advanced and took possession of the battle-field, when they were ordered to cook and forage ; an order more easily issued than obeyed, for nothing was to be found. And if the men kindled fires, it was more for the purpose of warming and drying themselves, than for any culinary purpose."

" The field presented a terrible picture of ruin and

carnage, especially on the left and in the centre, where the greatest efforts had been made to take and retake the redoubts. Corpses of the slain, broken arms, dead and dying horses, covered every elevation, filled every hollow, and plainly indicated the progress of the battle. In front of the redoubts lay the bodies of the French; behind the works, showing that they had been carried, lay the Russians. On many points the heaps of corpses told where squares of infantry had stood, and plainly indicated the size of the closely-formed masses."

"Nothing could be so striking, so appalling indeed, as the contrast between the tumult and thunder of the previous day's battle, and the grave-like stillness which now reigned over the field. On the minds of the soldiers this tranquil halt on the scene of death made a very unfavourable impression; distress and want pressed heavily upon them, and in their plain and direct mode of thinking, they could see no object in thus lingering inactively on a battle-plain that was no longer disputed. They all looked to Moscow as the termination of their sufferings. In the city of the Czars they expected to find rest, food, clothing, and that peace which could alone ensure a safe return to their homes; all their conversation turned on these cherished anticipations."

Many writers ascribe the entire failure of the Russian campaign to the unsatisfactory termination of the battle of Borodino; and this Segur accounts for by asserting that Napoleon's health failed him at the decisive moment, and that he remained a distant and apparently indifferent spectator of the dreadful conflict then raging, and constantly refused the pressing and reiterated applications of his generals to allow the guard to march and complete the defeat of the enemy. Both these assertions, as well as the consequence attempted to be drawn from

them, may be set at rest in a few words. None of the other officers, either French or German, who were present at Borodino, and have described that action, make the least mention of Napoleon's illness; and Gourgaud, who had frequent access to him during the day, expressly denies it, and triumphantly quotes the Emperor's own words as a sufficient reason for his not allowing the guard to march. "If there is another battle to-morrow, what shall I fight it with?" It seems to have occurred neither to Gourgaud nor to Napoleon, that the best means of preventing "another battle to-morrow," was to gain a decisive victory to-day: no one spoke of a battle the day after Austerlitz and Jena. The men so idly sacrificed in the false movements round Smolensk were, it seems, already missed.

In point of generalship, nothing certainly could be worse than allowing 20,000 picked soldiers to remain idle spectators of such a battle; for what drawn battle *only* would not have been rendered decisive by the appearance of so formidable a body of men? Situated as the French were, nothing but such a victory as should intimidate the Russian government into submission, could possibly avert their total destruction; so that every effort should have been risked in order to achieve that victory. Lossberg tells us indeed, that many French officers of rank, especially those on the staff of Murat, Ney, and Davoust, blamed Napoleon in strongest terms, not only for withholding the Guard and reserves, but for posting himself at so great a distance from the scene of action, that he could neither observe the progress of the battle, nor receive and answer reports with requisite promptness. The General, whose division took an active share in the conflict, adds, that his own

observations lead him to concur most fully in the justness of the censure.

We must add, however, that the complete defeat of the Russians might not, and certainly should not, have altered in the slightest degree the ultimate result of the campaign. The Russian army could not have been annihilated; they were in their own country, had forests around them, and three out of four quarters of the compass were open to their flight. They were not, like the Prussians in 1806, hemmed in by the Elbe, the Baltic, and the Oder; and above all, the French were too much exhausted to pursue.

It is, however, a curious circumstance, and deserving of particular attention, that Napoleon, who had rushed into the very centre of Russia, regardless of supplies, of the safety of his retreat and communication, should have hesitated to strike the last blow for that decisive victory, from which the success of the expedition could be alone expected. It was now evident to the whole army that their safety and retreat depended on their ability to intimidate the Czar and his people into peace and submission; and it was equally clear that the best mode of effecting this, was by giving the Russians as complete an overthrow as possible. Had the first partial success at Borodino been boldly followed up, the Russian army might perhaps have been routed, and the government intimidated; but hesitation was certain to ruin every thing: the few thousand French soldiers preserved by this caution, so contrary to Napoleon's usual system of war, could not possibly avert the destruction that afterwards fell upon his devoted host; whereas their judicious employment in the battle-field might have changed the fortunes of the war. We have before shown that it would have been easy to manœuvre the Russians

out of the position of Borodino, if any thing could have been gained, by merely gaining a few miles of additional country; but it was evident that nothing short of a decisive victory could save the army; and this Napoleon dared not strike for when the opportunity was offered. "The Emperor," says the Marquis de Chambray, "was on this occasion far below his reputation, and entirely wanting to his fame:" but though this may be true, he was, we suspect, acting in his real character nevertheless. Napoleon was rash and daring as long as he had brave thousands at command, and could apply to the conscription for additional forces when those at his disposal had been swept away. At the head of gallant bands he had challenged danger from afar; but like all men destitute of high mental courage, he shrunk from the contest when the foe had to be grappled with in close and deadly struggle.

During the night that followed the battle, the Russians fell back to Mojaisk, a distance of only five miles from the field. On the 9th the French came in sight, and then the retreat was continued by the same short and easy stages as before;—unimportant skirmishes occasionally taking place between the rear guard of the pursued and the advanced guard of the pursuers. The cause of Napoleon's slow movements may be found in the situation of his troops: they were obliged to spread far on each side of the road, to gather supplies; and the parties, exhausted by these long marauding expeditions, were naturally unfit to sustain harassing marches on the track of a retiring enemy. The want of water also added to the distress: this part of Russia is poor in rivers, the heat of the summer had been intense, the rivulets were mostly dried up, and the wells could ill supply such multitudes of men and horses following on

the traces of equally thirsty predecessors. All these sources of evil had been in progress since the army left Witebsk, and had tended so quickly to reduce its ranks. The Russians, on the other hand, were amply supplied with forage and provisions of every kind: during the whole march, abundance was in their camp, and the consequence was, that they lost no men except those who actually fell in battle.

The Russians seem at one time to have had some intention to fight another battle for the protection of Moscow; and had caused works to be commenced at Fili, two marches in front of the capital; but this intention, if ever real, was soon abandoned. "Seated in an arm-chair on the brow of the rising ground," says Prince Eugene of Würtemberg, "old Kutusoff listened silently to the various plans and projects confusedly proposed by the crowd of general and staff officers who surrounded him; till springing up at last, as if impatient, 'My own head,' he exclaimed, 'whether good or bad, shall decide this point for itself;' and immediately ordered the retreat to be continued."

On the 14th of September, the French reached the "Mount of Salvation," which commands a full view of the city of Moscow; and the soldiers, delighted with the dazzling spectacle presented by this vast and half-oriental capital, hailed the sight with shouts of enthusiasm that spread rapidly along the whole line of march. It was not only the haven of hope for which all had toiled and fought, but a magnificent prize also that was now within their grasp. Countless domes, spires, churches, and minarets, rising in gilded splendour amidst groves and gardens of luxuriant beauty; the huge towers of the Kremlin, the palace-fortress of the ancient Czars, reflecting the rays of the setting sun, from all its gorgeous

decorations, appeared to the eye a scene of romance rather than of reality. Even Napoleon was seized with delight on beholding this splendid sight, "And there," he said, "at last is that celebrated city:" then recollecting the state of his army, he added, "it was, indeed, full time."

As the French approached the suburbs, General Milaradowitch, who commanded the rear-guard of the Russians, despatched an officer with a flag of truce, to request an interview with the King of Naples; but Murat, thinking it beneath his rank perhaps, thus to come forward at the mere summons of a General of Division, sent General Sebastiani to hold the desired conference. The object of Milaradowitch was to obtain a two-hours' suspension of hostilities, to enable him to evacuate the city; and he declared that if the delay were not granted, he would defend the barriers, and the very houses of the suburbs, by which the safety of the capital would be endangered. After some time had elapsed, the request was granted, and the two Generals rode together for a space along the Moscow road, and General Clausewitz, who was present, says he heard Milaradowitch express a hope, that no injury would be done to the city of Moscow, to which Sebastiani replied with great animation, "Sir, the Emperor will place his own Guard at the head of the column, and thus render every species of disorder totally impossible." This assurance was repeated more than once; and we mention the circumstance here, to show how anxious both parties were for the preservation of the capital.

Napoleon waited impatiently at the entrance of one of the suburbs, for the arrival of a deputation which he expected would, as usual, come and implore the clemency of the victor. None, however, appeared; and it was

with difficulty that the officers charged to introduce the boyars and magistrates to his presence, assembled a few foreign merchants, who brought the extraordinary intelligence, that the city was totally deserted; the whole population, with the exception of some malefactors liberated from jails, the very scum and outcasts of society, in fact, having abandoned it. These tidings were perfectly true; and the army, on entering the vast capital, found it silent, desolate, and forsaken, and thus placed entirely at the disposal of the invading troops. Huts, stores, bazars, palaces, and hovels, all were theirs; and the famished and exhausted soldiers, in possession at last of the glittering reward of their toils and dangers, rushed into the deserted habitations in search of wine, food, booty, and good quarters. Rapine and intemperance were soon at their height; the disorder exceeded all bounds; and the ruin of the city, built in a great part of wood, thus sealed by the manner in which it was taken possession of, could not for a moment be doubtful; nor was its fate long delayed.

The Prussian Hussar, already quoted, traversed the doomed capital towards evening, and thus describes the spectacle he witnessed:—"The throng rushing through the suburbs was tremendous; and the streets presented a dreadful and appalling scene of plunder, increased rather than diminished by the absence of the inhabitants; while under the screen of augmenting darkness, the reckless soldiery gave full scope to the wildest rapine and licentiousness. From all sides was heard the bursting open of doors, the crashing of windows; every house was filled with soldiers, who were ransacking the dwellings of peaceful citizens, and searching with lights for booty and provisions." Lieutenant De Witte, of the Prussian Artillery, who was also present, expresses himself

in still stronger terms, and tells us, "that the scenes of rapine, cruelty, and infamy, exhibited in every direction, made even the hardest shudder, and would scarcely be credited, if ascribed even to hordes of absolute barbarians."*

Night had already closed on the revels of the troops, when the principal bazar was discovered to be on fire. The flames burned fiercely for some hours, but were at last extinguished by the exertions of the soldiers; and Napoleon, who had been awakened by the disturbance, removed from the suburban inn where he had at first established his quarters, to the palace of the Kremlin; whence it is said that he immediately wrote a letter to the Czar, containing proposals of peace. Certain it is, that he caused some indirect offers to be made, through the Governor of the Foundling Hospital, who was ordered to write to the Empress Dowager, patroness of the Institution, to acquaint her with the safety of the establishment which had been taken under the special protection of the French Emperor.

The following day was passed in making arrangements for restoring some semblance of order in the deserted capital, which the troops were plundering in all directions.† But these efforts could not avert the im-

* Militair-Wochenblatta. 1844.

† French writers in general, those of the Napoleon school in particular, always denounce any avowal by their own countrymen of disaster sustained, errors committed, or misconduct displayed by the troops, as proofs of a criminal want of patriotism. General Gourgaud is, therefore, very angry with Count Segur for revealing the marauding disposition of the soldiers, and tells an anecdote, aimed evidently at the Count himself; and which, if true, would only show to what extent the plundering practice was carried in the Imperial army. "A personage," says Gourgaud, "who was fond of India stuffs and shawls, had lowered himself into a cellar of the bazar, through an aperture at the top of the vault. From his position below, he handed up to the soldiers the stuffs he

pending ruin: and in the night fires again broke out in several quarters; and a gale rising at the same time, spread the flames with a degree of rapidity that defied every effort to suppress them. Wild rumours spread as fast as the wild elements: fire-balls had, it was said, been found burning in deserted houses; mines had been discovered, with lighted matches attached to them; and men and women were seen rushing, like the demons whom they resembled, through the very flames, augmenting the fires, and provided with implements for rendering the work of destruction more rapid and more certain. Some unhappy wretches, accused of incendiarism, were seized and shot with as little mercy as previous inquiry.

Day came at last, but only added to the horrors of the scene: the gale rose higher and higher; shifted to a different quarter, and carried the blazing brands and sparks to the yet untouched part of the city, and to the very roofs of the Kremlin. The palace was threatened with destruction; and towards evening, Napoleon was induced to leave his flame-encircled quarters. His retreat was not free from peril; and before he could gain the open country, he had to traverse, with his suite, streets arched with flame, in which the air was suffocating. When he reached the Petrowsky palace, the summer residence of the Czars, he turned round to look at the conflagration. It was, indeed, a frightful

selected; but the men, thinking the goods as much their property as his, disappeared with them, leaving in the vault the personage whose cupidity had brought him into it. And yet this *amateur* plunderer had not the excuse of having paid for the privilege, by the peril he had incurred; he was not called upon to encounter danger; and the only one to which he was exposed during the campaign, was that of being left in the cellar."—*Examen critique de l'ouvrage de* M. Le Comte Ph. de Segur, &c. &c.

spectacle: from the burning crater, miles in extent, a volume of flame was cast high above the devoted city, till seized by the equinoctial gale the mass was torn into fiery streaks, driven far along the midnight sky by the fury of the tempest, making the air glow for miles beyond the awful scene of devastation. Never, since the fall of Troy and Jerusalem, had mortal eyes beheld a sight so fearful; it struck even on the dull mind of Napoleon: and gazing on the ruin himself had wrought, he more than once repeated in melancholy tone, "This bodes us great misfortunes."

The following is the account our friend the Hussar gives of the aspect of affairs, on the first morning of the great fire:—"As soon as day broke, swarms of soldiers from the surrounding camps crowded into the city, to search amid the burning ruins for booty and provisions. The disorder and tumult were disgraceful in the extreme, and augmented in proportion as the unhappy capital sank into ashes. Where spirituous liquors were found,—and they were, unfortunately, too abundant, —the scenes of licentiousness were frightful to behold. Drunkenness was universal; and the disgusting rabble, driven before the encroaching flames, reeled from house to house, and from one scene of brutality to another. And woe to the officer who attempted to restore order, or demand from this horde of savages submission to his authority."

The fire continued for four days, and consumed in that brief space the labour of centuries, and two-thirds of the vast city. "Palaces and temples," says the Russian author, Karamsin, "monuments of art, and miracles of luxury, the remains of ages long since past and the creations of yesterday, the tombs of ancestors and the cradles of infancy, were indiscriminately de-

stroyed. Nothing was left of Moscow but the memory of her people, and their deep resolution to avenge her fate."

All Napoleon's admirers have boldly asserted that his failure was solely owing to the unheard-of sacrifice made by the Russians in burning their capital. Both the fallacies contained in the assertion are easily exposed.

In the first place, the Russians did not burn Moscow; and in the second place, the preservation of Moscow would not, in the slightest degree, have availed the French; but might, on the contrary, have tempted them to prolong their stay, and would thus have rendered their destruction more certain and more striking.

The Russians did not burn Moscow, because they had nothing but the ruin of their capital to gain by so wild an act of extravagance: the destruction of the French was their object, and the longer the French tarried in Moscow, the more certain that destruction became. There were, besides, about 25,000 sick and wounded Russians in Moscow, numbers of whom perished in the flames, and who would certainly not have been left in a city devoted to destruction. Moscow contains in general about 250,000 inhabitants, and could not possibly have furnished supplies capable of maintaining 100,000 full-grown Frenchmen, during the whole of a Russian winter. What, then, were they to do? Starve, or lay down their arms: one or the other alternative must have happened had they remained.

"Every day," says Segur, "our soldiers, and particularly those of the cavalry, were obliged to sally forth in quest of provisions. And as the vicinities of Moscow and Vincovo became more and more exhausted, they were every day forced to extend their search to a

greater distance. Men and horse returned completely worn down by fatigue ; that is, those who did return : for every supply of forage had to be torn from the enemy sword in hand. An endless succession of combats and ambuscades, that occasioned continual losses, was the necessary consequence. The peasants took part against us. They punished with death those among them who, induced by gain, had carried any provisions to our camps. Others set fire to their own villages to drive out our foragers, and throw them into the hands of the Cossacks, whom they had called to their assistance."

If forage was so scarce immediately after the occupation of the city, it must of course have become unattainable during the winter, owing to the snow and the Cossacks. To kill and salt the horses, as proposed by Count Daru, was therefore the only remedy ; and this would certainly have afforded a good supply of provisions of its kind : so that those who might have survived the endless skirmishing with the Cossacks, the cold, and the maladies resulting from such pernicious food, might, if left unmolested by the Russians,—which for argument's sake we shall suppose,—have lived to see the return of summer. But what then ? What was to become of this reduced army, without a single troop of horse, and without a single piece of moveable field artillery ? To undertake a march in the face of a Russian army provided with both, was of course impossible. To wait for reinforcements ? Whence were they to come ? It was only in May 1813, that Napoleon, with the wrecks of his Grand Army, was able to appear in Saxony with a new one of 140,000 men, of which no more than 5000 were cavalry, and these of a very inferior description : so that this new host of conscripts was farther from Moscow in May 1813, than the Grand Army had been

in May 1812; for they were by that time of the year already on the Oder and the Vistula. These new formations would have had to march over the country devastated in 1812, and in which the first invaders lost, as we have seen, a thousand men a-day from want, sickness, and fatigue; they must also have defeated the Russian army of Moldavia, which occupied the line of the Beresina, as early as the month of November 1812; and would then, supposing no other opposition made, have arrived at Moscow about the month of August. Of the 100,000 men whom we are supposing to have shut themselves up in the unfortified city of Moscow on salted horse-flesh the preceding winter, how many would have been alive by that time? and when this new, exhausted, and half-famished army of conscripts joined, what were they to effect? They would have come—

"But to augment the slaughter."

To set the question completely at rest, the possibility of such a junction has been supposed, though the reader will perceive at once that it could never have been effected. For allowing the main body of the grand Russian army to have remained in observation of the French shut up in Moscow—a very gratuitous supposition—they might easily have detached their light cavalry to aid in opposing the new invaders, who, being particularly weak in that arm, could have made little progress in a level country like Russia, when harassed by such a force, conducted with even ordinary skill. Besides, if the old and tried soldiers of Napoleon lost on their march, by sickness and want, more than one-half of those who escaped the sword, what proportion of this new army of conscripts could ever have reached Moscow? It would be a waste of words to argue the point any farther, or to

lay stress upon what subsequent events rendered evident, —that neither Prussia nor Austria would have listened very tranquilly to the news that the Grand Army was locked up by winter in the capital of Russia. The burning of Moscow did not therefore accelerate, by a single hour, a catastrophe which its preservation could as little have averted. More than one-third of the city escaped the flames, and afforded good and ample quarters for the invaders, had they been disposed to prolong their stay.

But it will be asked, How then was Moscow burnt: for if the Russians did not burn it, the French certainly would not? The answer is very easy. The first thing famishing troops are likely to do on entering a town is to demand food; but when there are no inhabitants to supply them, as was the case in the deserted city of Moscow, the soldiers naturally look for it themselves; and as they are not generally provided with lanterns and wax tapers for the purpose of searching cellars, cupboards, and dark corners, their usual substitutes are wisps of lighted straw, or burning sticks: and thousands of famishing wretches so employed—to say nothing of intemperance, and the proverbial carelessness of soldiers —would soon set fire to a deserted city, mostly built of wood. We have seen what the conduct of the troops was on entering the capital, and may safely ask, How could any city escape being burnt under such circumstances?

The Russians, finding that great honour attached to this presumed sacrifice, very quietly took the credit of it to themselves, though they had in the first instance accused the French of the deed. Count Rostopchin, in a pamphlet written on the subject, frankly owns that it was not the act of the Russian government: but so

proud have the nation become of this pretended deed of heroism, "this sublimest of volcanoes," that Colonel Baturlin, in his half-official account of the campaign of 1812, avowing that no direct orders were given for the destruction of the city, insinuates, nevertheless, that intelligible hints to the same effect had emanated from the highest quarter, and were received as absolute commands in consequence. We doubt the assertion altogether, and believe the fire to have been the very natural result of the circumstances under which the deserted city was taken possession of by the famishing French. Nor can the Russians claim any credit for this pretended national sacrifice, unless at the expense of the very moderate degree of sagacity which must have rendered the needless severity of such a measure plain and apparent. It is time, indeed, that these idle tales should be effaced from history; and the high patriot spirit so universally displayed by the Russian people during this arduous contest, is of too noble a character to require the aid of such puerile fictions.

On the 19th Napoleon returned to the Kremlin, to wait for that peace which, as his own defeat was now certain, could only be expected from the weakness of his adversaries. The remains of the vast city still furnished quarters for the army, nor were provisions altogether wanting. The soldiers, with professional thoughtlessness, amused themselves in searching the ruins for articles of value; they fitted up a theatre, and attended plays performed by actors who had followed them in their march. The Emperor himself exhibited his pretended equanimity, by dating a decree for regulating the affairs of the *Theatre Français* at Paris, from "His Imperial Head-Quarters in the Kremlin." He wished to appear as if he stood on firm ground even at that

distance from France; and there was, as Mr Lockhart justly observes, "audacious quackery in a stage rescript dated from Moscow." In thus forwarding his own decrees to Paris, he was careful not to allow the real situation of affairs to become known; all the private letters from the army were stopped at Dresden, and there destroyed by Imperial orders.

Nor was the Parisian world alone to be deceived; for Napoleon endeavoured to impose even upon his generals and immediate followers; and at the very time when a hasty and precipitate retreat left the only chance of saving perhaps some remnants of the host, he still pretended to devise and prepare offensive movements against Petersburg, "which would not fail," as the official memorandum says, "to intimidate the enemy, and induce him to make peace." This puerile attempt at deception would not be worth recording, if it stood alone of its kind; but when added to the extravagant project put forward after the failure at Acre, the defeat of Trafalgar, and the equally impracticable plans we shall yet have to mention, it helps to throw light on a very important trait of Napoleon's character.

The period of delusion was now, however, hastening rapidly to a close. No answer to the proposals for peace was received from Petersburg; Cossacks, light troops, and partisan bands, were already gathering on the French line of communication; convoys had been intercepted, detachments attacked; even considerable parties had been defeated, some actually captured. Kutusoff also had made a threatening movement: for instead of continuing his retreat due east to Wladimir, he had taken a southerly direction after leaving Moscow, and having marched for two days along the Riazan road, had turned suddenly to the west, and circling round the

capital, had taken post at Taroutino, to the south-west of that city, and nearer Mojaisk and Smolensk than Napoleon's army. The French were for the first few days so much occupied with Moscow, that they allowed this movement to be executed without the least interruption: busied with their conquest, they had neglected and altogether lost sight of the adversaries. "During the march," says Clausewitz, "we could distinctly perceive the appalling conflagration of Moscow; and though at the distance of thirty-five miles from the scene of ruin, the gale often brought the ashes over to us. The Russians, however familiarised to such sacrifices by the fate of Smolensk and other towns, were deeply affected by the destruction of the capital; it excited in their breasts a fierce and deadly hatred of the enemy to whose arrogance, cruelty, and barbarity, this deed of unprincipled vengeance was universally ascribed."

It is admitted by the intelligent author just quoted, that there existed at this time a deep degree of despondency in the Russian army. This did not arise from any want of courage or resolution; on the contrary, the military pride of the troops remained unbroken, and they retained a full reliance on what they could effect as soldiers; but their confidence in the higher powers was reduced to the lowest ebb; the losses sustained by the country were looked upon as overwhelming; and little dependence was placed in the ultimate firmness of the government. Only fourteen days before the retreat of the French, General Barclay, the second in command of the army, still despaired of the result; and when General Clausewitz and some other Prussian officers, who had been ordered to Petersburg, waited upon him to take leave, he congratulated them on being called away: "for, you may depend upon it," he said, "no-

thing good can ever come of this unfortunate business." "We saw things in a different light," observes Clausewitz; "but then we were foreigners anticipating great benefits to the general cause from the success of the Russians, and did not feel so deeply as they did the losses they had sustained, and the ravages to which the country had been exposed. At a distance from the line of operations, beyond the sight of the havoc committed, the spirit was already a great deal better; and at Petersburg not the least doubt of the result was entertained."

And now, indeed, that result was evident. Admiral Tchitchagoff, with the Moldavian army, had already joined Tormasow in Volhinia; and Schwarzenberg, unable to face such superior foes, had been obliged to fall back. On the Düna also, fortune had turned decidedly against the French. General Wittgenstein had repulsed all the attacks of Oudinot and St Cyr; and, reinforced by the troops of General Steinhel, he was now ordered to assume the offensive, to advance towards the Beresina, and give his hand to Admiral Tchitchagoff, who was directed to move upon Minsk and occupy Borisow on the same river; and thus completely to cut off the retreat of the French army cooped up in Moscow. Though these operations were not exactly carried into effect in the manner prescribed, the mere threat of thus surrounding the invaders, blocking them up in the centre of Russia at the very approach of winter, gave ample warning of danger, and called on Napoleon for the speedy adoption of every measure by which it could be averted.

And what were the measures this man of boasted genius had in reserve, to save his army from impending ruin? The bravery of his soldiers had rendered him victorious in the field; the capital of the hostile empire

was in his possession ; but *he* was defeated. Blinded by vanity, it was evident that he had never supposed it possible that his enemies would dare to avail themselves of the victory he had placed in their hands ; and as they would not allow him to dictate a peace, he was obliged to sue for it, and had the mortification to sue in vain. No answer to his indirect proposals having been received, Napoleon, on the 3d October, sent General Lauriston, formerly Ambassador at Petersburg, to the Russian head-quarters. He was charged with a letter for the Emperor Alexander, which he was directed to deliver in person : Napoleon's parting words were, " I must have peace ; it is necessary to us : and I will sacrifice to obtain it all except my honour."

Kutusoff received the French messenger with the greatest politeness ; expressed the most anxious desire for peace ; but declared that he had no power to negotiate, or to allow any messenger to pass ; and therefore declined to grant General Lauriston the desired passport for proceeding to Petersburg : he offered, however, to send General Wolkonsky, one of Alexander's aides-de-camp, to learn the Emperor's pleasure. Lauriston was reluctantly forced to submit ; but though part of his embassy had failed, the desire for peace expressed at the Russian head-quarters had been so general, and apparently so sincere, that he returned to Moscow, with the firm conviction of an early pacification. Some Russian officers had said that " Petersburg would be illuminated" on the receipt of Napoleon's letter : the General repeated this idle speech, and his master was weak enough to suppose that, at his mere bidding, the victors would actually bend to the vanquished.

This delusion, too, was to be brief. Time flew fast, fresh losses were every day sustained, a slight but omi-

nous fall of snow occurred on the 13th, and General Lauriston was again despatched to the Russian head-quarters—Napoleon thus avowing to his very enemies the critical nature of his position. As it was their interest to prolong his suspense, and augment his difficulties, the messenger was amused for a couple of days at Taroutino, and then allowed to return without any definitive reply; though a distinct answer was soon to follow.

A French division, amounting to about 25,000 men, was stationed at Vincovo, under the orders of Murat, King of Naples, for the purpose of observing the motions of Kutusoff's army. By tacit understanding, though without any special arrangement, all hostilities had gradually ceased between the outposts of the two adverse lines; and the French, rendered careless by their long career of victory, anticipating a speedy pacification from Lauriston's repeated visits to the Russian camp, kept but indifferent watch. Their position also was ill chosen: on the left an unoccupied forest approached to within 1200 yards of the outposts, which were but a short distance in advance of the main body of the division. From this forest, Colonel Toll, the Russian Quarter-master-General, reconnoitred the hostile position on the 17th, and soon discovered the facility with which the army might be surprised. It was not easy, however, to persuade the cautious Kutusoff to hazard the attempt: time was thus lost, the dispositions were issued at the latest hour, and, as often happens under such circumstances, not very accurately obeyed. The attack was made before day-break on the morning of the 18th October; the French, though surprised, behaved with great bravery; Murat displayed not only gallantry, but skill also; and seeing the impossibility of contending

against an army, effected his retreat in good order, and before the Russian columns destined to intercept his march had gained their proper station. If the assailants had struck in together, and acted with proper energy, the entire of the hostile division might perhaps have been destroyed ; Murat's promptness and decision saved them, and they escaped with a loss of only 2000 men, thirty-six guns, and all their baggage. Though the blow was but partially successful, it was severe enough to show that Russia was not a bed of roses on which the invaders could linger at pleasure.

CHAPTER III.

THE FRENCH EVACUATE MOSCOW: BATTLE OF MALA-YARAZLAVITZ: DISASTROUS NATURE OF THE RETREAT: ARRIVAL AT SMOLENSK: COMBATS OF KRASNOE: PASSAGE OF THE BERESINA: NAPOLEON LEAVES THE ARMY AND ARRIVES AT PARIS: TOTAL DISSOLUTION OF THE GRAND ARMY: EVENTS IN SPAIN.

Though Napoleon had already given some orders for sending back the sick and wounded, it was not till the middle of October that all hopes of dictating a peace to Russia vanished from his mind. On the 15th, directions were issued to prepare for leaving Moscow; and on the 19th, the army commenced the march of death. Including reinforcements received, and the convalescents who had rejoined the ranks; counting the troops under Marshal Mortier, that for some days continued to occupy the Kremlin; the division under Murat, and the corps stationed at Mojaisk; the total force which now entered upon this fatal retreat amounted to 116,000 men. Of these, 14,000 were cavalry, and they had still 600 guns in their train; but the horses were in such wretched condition, that little efficient service could be expected either from the artillery or cavalry; the strength of the army centred altogether in the infantry. The troops were accompanied, at their departure, by a motley and extraordinary crowd of followers: the former French merchants resident at Moscow; Russian prisoners,

bearded peasants, pressed into the service to act as guides and conductors to the 7500 carriages, loaded with the spoils of the ruined capital, that burdened the march of this unwieldy host. According to Segur, the miscellaneous crew resembled "a horde of Tartars returning from a successful invasion," rather than the disciplined army of a Christian country.

Making a feint in the direction of Krosnoi-Pachra, as if moving down upon the Russian position, the army soon wheeled to the right, and struck into the Kaluga road, taking its direction on Mala-Yarazlavitz, a small town on the right bank of the Luga. By this movement, Napoleon intended to reach the Kaluga road before Kutusoff could interpose between him and that town, and thus secure the advantage of retiring to Smolensk through a fertile and unwasted country. It is not very clear that much benefit would have been derived even from the success of the measure. A retiring army can have no time to disperse and collect provisions, if closely followed by vigilant pursuers; there are no stores and magazines from which it can be supplied; and the hostile inhabitants will not be over ready to furnish them, when those who demand the requisitions cannot tarry to see the orders complied with. The movement, whatever its object may have been, failed however completely.

On the 22d, two battalions of the Viceroy's corps already occupied the important position of Mala-Yarazlavitz; but early on the following morning they were dislodged by the leading division of the Russian army, advancing from Taroutino. The French, fully sensible of the value of the post, immediately re-attacked it, and a very severe action took place. The burning town was captured and recaptured several times during the strug-

gle, as reinforcements arrived to the contending parties. At the close of day it remained at last in possession of the invaders, but by this time the whole Russian army had already taken post across the Kaluga road, by which all farther advance in that direction was rendered impossible, until Kutusoff should be driven from his ground. It now became a question, whether a general action ought to be risked for the few benefits that even victory could gain for a host situated as the French were.

In the poor hut of a poor weaver, which served for his head-quarters, Napoleon, now reduced to extremity, deigned to consult his marshals on the measure to be adopted. Murat, Bessiers, and Count Lobau, separately questioned, all objected to hazarding a battle ; and the latter recommended an immediate retreat behind the Niemen, and by the nearest and best known road. Napoleon, who could hardly fail to perceive that the death-warrant of the army was to be found in these words, determined to examine the position of the Russians before adopting any decided resolution. On riding forward to Mala-Yarazlavitz, the imperial escort was assailed by a swarm of Cossacks, who had crossed the river : a skirmish ensued, in which the Emperor himself was exposed to some danger ; but the warriors of the Don seeing a park of artillery before them, forsook the more valuable prize within their reach ; galloped forward to secure the guns, and having partly effected their object, retired again as fast as they had advanced. Relieved from this peril, the Emperor proceeded to examine the Russian position ; and Davoust having also given his opinion in favour of a retreat, the resolution to fall back was adopted in the very sight of the hostile army, then preparing for a similar movement.

On the morning of the 26th, both parties commenced

their retreat; and the Marquis de Chambray assures us that Napoleon was already informed of Kutusoff's retrograde movement before he began his own. If so, it proves how wanton was the sacrifice of the brave men unprofitably slain in the sanguinary battle of Mala-Yarazlavitz.

The retreat of the French lay towards Wereja, where Marshal Mortier, with the divisions from Moscow, joined the army. These troops had left the capital on the 23d, after blowing up the Kremlin, in accordance with the orders to that effect. As this ancient palace could never serve as a fortress, its wanton destruction cannot fail to be looked upon as an additional proof of the low and dishonourable feeling, resulting from wounded vanity, which so constantly influenced the actions of its author. Of the same character, and of a meaner description even, was the destruction of the palaces of Count Razumowski and Rostopchin: both edifices had escaped the previous fire, but Napoleon by special orders directed the troops to burn them before evacuating the city. And these wanton and ignoble acts of malice were committed at the very time when 1200 sick and wounded French, who could not be removed, were left in the hospitals of Moscow, to the mercy of a half-barbarous population, who, on returning to their ruined habitations, would be sufficiently exasperated on witnessing the mischief committed by the legitimate fortune of war, without requiring to be further excited by beholding the consequences of wanton destruction: men must be little indeed, if the perpetrator of such actions can be termed great.

Marshal Mortier's division had captured a prisoner of some note. This was General Wizingerode, who commanded a party of Russian troops stationed in observation to the north of Moscow, and who, with his

aide-de-camp, had been taken on the morning the capital was evacuated. He was brought before the Emperor, and assailed with the bitter virulence so natural to vulgar minds. Napoleon called the General "an English hireling and incendiary, taxed him with being the leader of Cossacks, and threatened to have him shot as a brigand." Wizingerode replied, that "he did not command Cossacks, but a division of the regular army; and that, as a Russian soldier, he was at all times prepared for a French bullet." "And who are you?" continued the Emperor, in his ignoble rage, "a man without a country; you have ever been my enemy. You were in the Austrian ranks at Austerlitz, and I now find you in the Russian! Nevertheless, you are a native of the Confederation of the Rhine, and therefore my subject and a rebel. Seize him, gens d'armes! Let the traitor be brought to trial." The attendants hurried the General out of the apartment, and had wisdom enough to send him forward as a prisoner of war to Smolensk. Fortune followed him, and he was rescued by the Cossacks long before the termination of his journey.

On the 29th October the army reached Mojaisk, and passed over the field of Borodino, the aspect of which chilled the very hearts of the soldiers. An icy wind swept along; and where war had raged in all its fiery might, silent decay now reigned in unsparing absolutism: woods and forests were bare and bereft of their foliage, and the marks of the terrible battle, though not effaced, were already changed. The broken arms and fragments of warlike instruments thickly scattered around, were partially covered by the withered leaves and grass of autumn; and the unburied corpses, that continued to fill every hollow and cover every elevation, were now naked, black, and shrivelled.

"The army," says the Prussian Hussar so often quoted, "moved in mute and gloomy stillness over the fatal plain on which so many of the brave had fought, in hopes of a better destiny. Though fatigue and famine were already suppressing the better feelings of nature, and rendering selfishness and the hopes of self-preservation the ruling passion of all, it was impossible to contemplate this vast cemetery without emotions of grief and awe. Instigated by these sentiments, I rode to the spot where our regiment had fought. There we had lately appeared in all the gallant array of war, and stood victorious in front of valiant foes;—and now, at the expiration of only fifty days, we were in a condition to excite pity rather than inspire dread." And from this point where the troops entered the direct and wasted road to Smolensk, may be dated that memorable retreat which exhibited to the world the destruction of the mightiest host which had ever gone forth from the bosom of civilized nations: and the most frightful triumph that frost and famine ever achieved over the feeble frame of man. With the exception of some droves of cattle, the provisions brought from Moscow were already consumed; and the weather, which had hitherto been mild, suddenly changed, and became intensely cold.

Nor were the Russians inactive. Kutusoff was no sooner informed that the French were in actual retreat, than he despatched General Milaradowitch with 18,000 men, to press upon their rear, while with the main army he kept on a parallel line with them. Still farther to augment their difficulties, whole swarms of spoil-breathing Cossacks, Kalmucks, and Baskiers, were set upon their flying traces. From the shores of the Euxine and the Caspian—from the farthest districts of Siberia,

and the confines of China, horsemen were brought to contend against the soldiers of a nation, the very name of which few had ever heard. Many still wore the chain-armour of the ancient *Cataphrastæ;* others wielded the bow, once so formidable in Parthian hands; they were mounted on the small but active and hardy steeds of the desert: and the wild dresses and wilder features of the men, the shaggy hair and long-streaming manes of the horses, gave them a strange and uncouth appearance to European eyes. Little to be dreaded in the regular battle-field, these bands now became formidable from circumstances. Swarming in all directions round the hostile columns, they obliged the French to move in compact masses along the wasted line of road already traversed. Constantly on the alert, they never ceased to harass the enemy; no straggler escaped their quickness; every ill-guarded convoy was certain of being assailed; a number were captured; certain destruction awaited all feeble parties round which their swarms could gather, and several even of considerable strength were attacked, dispersed, or taken.

Davoust, who commanded the last division, had already suffered severe losses from these indefatigable horsemen, when Ney arrived to take the command of the rear-guard. His best efforts were soon put to the test. On the 3d of November Milaradowitch, not aware perhaps that Eugene and Poniatowsky had halted to support Davoust, attacked the three corps at Wiasma. A long and severe combat ensued, which, owing to the relative situation of the parties, naturally turned to the disadvantage of the French, who, besides 4000 prisoners, had to leave all their wounded in the hands of the Russians. Napoleon was not present in the field, and his absence proved a culpable repetition of the error committed at

Valutino Gora: for we find, from Marshal Ney's report, that the want of concert greatly augmented the loss sustained.

Every day now added to the calamities that were rapidly destroying this once magnificent army. On the 6th of November the snow began to fall, and not only impeded the progress of the march, but soon covered the little pasturage that had yet supported the few herds and draft cattle which remained to the army. The horses, not even rough-shod, sank down and perished by hundreds, and furnished the only food within reach of the famishing troops. "Accustomed to be fed by the hands of men, numbers of the poor animals," says Lossberg, "staggered feebly after the columns, or gathered round the bivouacs, till they fell down exhausted, or were slaughtered by the soldiers."*

Night, instead of bringing relief, only augmented the horrors that encompassed the fugitives. The towns and villages, few in number, had been destroyed during the advance, and offered no shelter to the distressed multitude, who, already weakened and worn down by famine, exposed on the hard snow to the blood-chilling cold of the north, fell rapid victims to their sufferings. Death in every shape accompanied this frightful march: frost and famine were in the midst of the ranks; on right and left gleamed the lances of the Cossacks; and from above, the tempest drove large flakes of snow into the eyes of the blinded soldiers, concealed the path from view, and quickly covered with a winding-sheet of frost all who sank beneath these accumulating woes. In many cases, insanity deprived the sufferers of consciousness,

* Briefe in die Heimath von General-Lt von Lossberg. Frankfurt, A. M. 1845.

before death brought them permanent relief: these men roared, shouted, or raised the wild yell of maniac laughter amid the groans of surrounding horror, and generally "died blaspheming." The road was marked by the dead and the dying; and at morning ray, every watch-fire was found encircled by the black, frozen, and often half-burnt corpses of men who, lying down to rest their wearied limbs, had only found "the sleep that knows no waking."

To augment the weight of calamities pressing upon this miserable host, the bonds of discipline also gave way; and the disorders that followed tended necessarily to heighten the evils which had occasioned them. Many soldiers, frost-bitten, or reduced in strength, threw away their arms; others without cause imitated the same example, which spread with fatal rapidity through the ranks; till thousands assuming literally the sack and staff of pauperism, followed the army in dishonourable bands, totally indifferent to the command of their superiors. Swarms of these hideous apparitions surrounded the Russian bivouacs at night, and mixed with their columns during the day, imploring relief from their very pursuers, who treated them as objects of pity or indifference rather than as enemies. A ravenous selfishness, and fiendish disregard to the sufferings of others, grew upon the hearts of the armed and unarmed. No aid was given to distressed comrades; the feeble and the sinking were avoided like infected plague patients; sick and wounded men were thrown off the carts and carriages on which they had been placed; and on one occasion a number of Russian prisoners were shot, because their guards were tired of escorting them. Plunder was universal; the dead were instantly stript, and impatient

rapacity too often seized upon its victims before death had even terminated their sufferings.* Guns, baggage, and carriages, were gradually abandoned to the enemy as the horses perished from want, or were slain for food by the famishing soldiery. The spoils of Moscow, consisting mostly of ancient armour and Turkish trophies, intended to gratify the vanity of the Parisians, were thrown into a lake: the conqueror's broken car was the only trophy destined to return from this expedition.

The Viceroy's corps suffered even in greater proportion than the others. Ordered to march on Douchowtchina, thus to diminish the pressure on the main road, they found the bridges over the Wop destroyed, and the rivulet itself augmented by the wintry floods to a dangerous torrent; but famine pressed and the foe advanced, and it became necessary to venture on the difficult fords. A part of the infantry passed in safety; but thousands, enfeebled by previous exertions, feared to buffet the foam-covered waves, and were captured by the pursuers. All the baggage and sixty-three pieces of artillery also fell into the hands of the Russians; many even of those who had passed the stream, wanted strength to ascend the ice-covered hill that formed the opposite bank, and perished from cold during the night. The survivors, on reaching Douchowtchina next day, had to fight for their quarters, the Cossacks being already in possession of the place; and though the French prevailed, and secured a night's rest and some supplies, they were yet obliged to alter the direction of their march, and

* Lossberg relates the following incident:—A French officer had fallen down exhausted and apparently dead; the first soldier who came up instantly constituted himself heir to his property, and commenced stripping him. "I am not yet dead," said the expiring man in a feeble voice. "Well, *mon commandant*," replied the other, with perfect composure, "I can wait a little."

rejoin the remnants of the Grand Army now collecting at Smolensk. The Viceroy reached that town with 6000 men, all that remained of 42,000 who had taken the field with him at the opening of the campaign : and even of this small band how few were destined to escape death or captivity !

While the army of Italy was sustaining these heavy losses on the Wop, a division, lately arrived from France under General Augereau, and composed of 1500 infantry and 500 cavalry, were surrounded at Liachova by the Russian light troops under Count Orloff Denisow, and forced to lay down their arms : several detachments and valuable convoys were captured in a similar manner by these bold partisans.

The retiring army had now gained Smolensk, so long the object of their wishes, and where they expected to find provisions, shelter, and reinforcements—an end, in fact, to their sufferings. But in these hopes they were cruelly disappointed. The ruins of the town, destroyed during the advance, could afford them no shelter ; and though considerable magazines had been formed within its walls, they were either insufficient for the demands made upon them, or so badly administered, that they conferred little benefit on the army at large. The unarmed followers having been refused a share of the supplies, forced the guards, broke open the stores, and gave the whole of their contents up to indiscriminate plunder : and the town, during the stay of the troops, became a vast scene of pillage and disorder.

If the soldiers found little to cheer them at Smolensk, the tidings which there reached Napoleon were of a gloomy character indeed. A despatch from Paris brought the news of Mallet's strange conspiracy, which we shall presently have to relate, and which naturally

turned all his thoughts towards France ; but perils already intervened between him and his distant dominions, and these were every day closing thicker and thicker around. In the north, St Cyr and Oudinot had lost ground against Wittgenstein and Steinhel. Though joined by Marshal Victor, they had fought to disadvantage in the action of Tchaschniki, and allowed Witebsk with its magazines to fall into the hands of the Russians, who were already threatening to intercept the direct line of the French retreat. From the south, the news were equally unfavourable. Tormasow, joined by Admiral Tchitchagoff with the Moldavian army, had obliged Prince Schwarzenberg to retire, and shelter himself behind the Bug from the assaults of such superior forces. Profiting by this advantage, the Admiral had directed his march on Minsk, and was already nearer that important point than any French corps which could be opposed to him : the web was thus drawing closer and closer around the fugitives.

And yet it appears from his letters, that to the very day of his arrival at Smolensk, Napoleon intended to take up winter quarters behind the Düna and Dnieper : and the want of ordinary foresight and power of calculation which his orders display, the habitual practice of deceiving subordinates which they evince, would hardly be believed unless on the authority of the documents he has himself furnished. On the 6th November he writes to Marshal Victor, commanding him to attack and drive Wittgenstein back beyond the Düna, "that the Grand Army may be enabled to find the necessary winter quarters, and be in a position to secure peace, or threaten Petersburg in the spring." At this time it was already perfectly evident to all, but the Emperor at least, that the army could not possibly halt, unless the Russians

discontinued the pursuit of their own accord, a circumstance hardly to be anticipated. The Marshals, Victor, Oudinot, and St Cyr, ignorant however of the real situation of the troops, prepared to obey, and assailed Wittgenstein's position at Smoliany on the 14th November ; but darkness terminated the combat before it had become general. During the night another more urgent order was received, directing Wittgenstein to be driven back, "as the Grand Army required to take up their winter quarters between Polotzk, Witebsk, Orcha, and Mogileu." In this letter the condition of the troops is still concealed from the marshals ; but the bearer, an officer of Victor's staff, had seen the situation to which they were reduced, and reported it accordingly. This produced an immediate change in the resolution of the commanders ; and though the armies were drawn out for battle on the following day, it was determined to disobey the Imperial mandate, and to retire without risking any farther conflict.

This disobedience of orders has, of course, been assigned by Napoleon's defenders as one of the principal causes of the destruction of the "Grand Army," though it produced little or no effect on the fate of that miserable host. The marshals were not in a condition to achieve a very decisive victory, nor could the most brilliant success on their part have benefited the main body, whereas defeat might have led to its utter ruin ; for it was Victor's corps which afterwards protected the passage of the Beresina. We have mentioned this circumstance, not merely to show how recklessly Napoleon ordered battles to be fought, and blood to be shed, where it must have been clear to ordinary calculation that no objects could be gained by sacrificing the lives of brave men ; but also to give an instance of that ignoble system of deception

and mystification which he pursued towards officers holding the highest and most important commands; a system that naturally led to a want of confidence on the part of his lieutenants, and occasioned acts of insubordination similar to those here described, and which we never find punished, owing, no doubt, to the false statements on which the disregarded orders were founded.

And none could be more false than those on which the orders to Victor rested; for at the very time they were written, Napoleon was already preparing for his final retreat. The troops under arms, including the garrison of Smolensk, and the various detachments taken up along the road, amounted to 50,000 men, accompanied by about 40,000 unarmed stragglers; which, supposing 10,000 men only to have joined the army since its departure from Moscow, already gives a loss of 40,000 men sustained during that first stage of the march.

On the 14th, the Emperor left Smolensk at the head of his Guards, four German battalions, which had remained in the rear of the army, and 2000 cavalry; making in all a force of 16,000 men. The army preceded and followed in six divisions, with a day's interval between each; and thus separated, offered an easy prey to the Russians, had they possessed the necessary skill or energy to avail themselves of the advantage tendered. The weather, however, was milder, and on the 19th a thaw succeeded to the frost of the previous days; a change of temperature which, though it injured the roads, afforded some relief to the troops during their night bivouacs. Incredible as it may appear, the Russian commander-in-chief was not aware of the direction in which the French were retiring. He was marching on Krasnoe, but with no very firm or distinct resolution, and when Milaradowitch, who led the advance,

met the French Guards with Napoleon at their head, he thought them too strong to be attacked, and contented himself with following and cannonading them into Krasnoe. Here the Emperor learned that the whole Russian army was collecting on his flank, and he therefore resolved to make a stand, as the only means of saving the corps still on the march from Smolensk; and Kutusoff's timidity rendered that an easy task which, against more resolute enemies, would have been totally impracticable.

Eugene Beauharnais was the first to derive the benefit of the Emperor's resolution. On the evening of the 16th, his advanced guard, bravely led by General Guilleminot, was received with a fire of artillery from the guns of the Russian division, which already interposed between the two French corps. An action instantly commenced; but Milaradowitch, bound by superior orders which commanded him to risk nothing whatever—to "build the enemy a golden bridge," as he told the Prince of Würtenberg, who was anxious to press the attack with his division—brought only half his troops into play; the Viceroy, repulsed and not pursued, made a circuitous march during the night, and rejoined the Emperor at Krasnoe; happy to escape from threatened ruin with the loss of 2000 men, and all his artillery. Kutusoff, who had remained a tranquil spectator of this partial action, now determined to attack the French on the following morning, and issued the necessary dispositions in consequence. Had he persevered in his resolution, and proved successful, he would have thrown the enemy back upon the Dnieper, and might possibly have destroyed their army at a single blow; but he no sooner heard that Napoleon was still at Krasnoe, than the project was abandoned, and limited to another partial

attack on the corps of Davoust, which was advancing from Smolensk.

The Marshal had left that place on the 16th, and hearing what had befallen the Viceroy's army, easily foresaw what he had to anticipate. He hurried his march accordingly, and arrived early on the 17th at Katowa, within two miles of Krasnoe. Here he found an action already engaged; for Napoleon, perceiving that something more than halting was required to ensure the safety of his remaining troops, had turned upon the Russians, and was cannonading their position. Under protection of the partial combat which followed, Davoust, by a circuitous march, turned the left of the enemy, even as the Viceroy had done, and thus effected his junction with the Guards. Three or four of his battalions were indeed cut off by the Russians, but considering that the retreat was conducted in sight of at least 50,000 adversaries, it certainly reflects the greatest credit on the Marshal, as well as on the officers and soldiers under his command.

Thus far successful, Napoleon immediately commenced his march towards Liadi, leaving Marshal Ney and the rear-guard to their fate. Mortier and Davoust were indeed ordered to hold Krasnoe as long as possible; but unable to resist the forces that were pressing upon them, they were soon driven from the town, and obliged to follow on the footsteps of the Emperor; happy even to escape unpursued. The number of trophies, guns, prisoners, standards, Davoust's *baton* of marshal, captured by the Russians, served to console them for the absence of more signal success, and helped also, perhaps, to gloss over the want of energy which had marked their operations.

We must now turn to the "bravest of the brave,"

who was in the most imminent peril. Agreeable to Napoleon's orders, the fortifications of Smolensk were blown up on the morning of the 17th, at the very time when 5000 sick and wounded French were left in the town, without food, medicines, or attendance, to the mercy of the Russians. This useless, impolitic, and under the circumstances of the case, vindictive measure, suggested by petty malice to a mind totally uninfluenced by feelings of humanity, having been executed, the Marshal commenced his march towards Krasnoe.

In the thick mist of a November evening, his advanced guard came unexpectedly on the Russian guns; not in battery as French and English writers assert, but drawn up in column of march, on the Krasnoe road. Every thing seemed in perfect peace, guards and piquets there were none, and no one appeared to suspect that a hostile force was still close in the rear. Had the French availed themselves of this strange surprise, they might probably have thrown the Russians into great confusion; but a little surprised themselves perhaps, they lost the favourable opportunity; and General Paskewitz, who observed the danger, having hastily collected some troops of cavalry, drove their advanced guard back across the Losmina; when both parties immediately prepared for the combat. The situation of the French seemed so desperate, that a Russian officer came forward and invited Marshal Ney to capitulate. "A marshal of France never surrenders," was the reply of the dauntless soldier, who retaining the messenger, gave instant orders for the attack.

Animated by the presence of their leader, the French made the most resolute attempts to force the passage of the stream; several times a footing was gained upon the hostile bank; but the constantly augmenting num-

bers of the enemy as quickly recovered the ground. Onset followed onset, with undiminished gallantry, but the adverse superiority was overwhelming: and after performing prodigies of valour, the small remnant of the broken band was obliged to retire from the unequal contest. The Russians, thinking themselves secure of their prey, made no attempt to pursue. But the courage of the brave sunk not with the dangers that now encompassed them. Retiring for some time along the Smolensk road, they suddenly turned to the north, and made for the Dnieper; trusting that if they could pass the river on the ice, they would be able to join Napoleon by the right bank; all farther progress by the left being clearly impracticable.

At midnight, the party reached the stream near the village of Syrokorenie, and after a three-hours' halt to rest the men and allow the stragglers to close up, Marshal Ney commenced the passage of the river. Every step was attended with danger; the few days of mild weather had so completely softened the ice, that it bent beneath the feet of the soldiers, who were obliged to cross in single files. The artillery and baggage were abandoned, the sick and wounded left to the mercy of the pursuers: in such scenes, lamentations and entreaties for aid were addressed to deaf ears.

But even those who reached the opposite bank found little safety. While striving to obtain some rest in the villages of Gusinoe, they were surrounded by the Cossacks; as these foes were not, however, numerous enough to venture on a serious attack, the Marshal made his men cook in the very centre of the hostile bands, and then bursting through the circle, he gained the neighbouring forest, sustaining only some loss from the Russian artillery. On the following morning appear-

ances bore a gloomier aspect, and the march had to be continued under a constant fire, and in closely formed squares. At last one of these was broken and sabred, and the other forced to take shelter in a small adjoining wood, where the fugitives were so closely surrounded that escape seemed impossible.

But stratagem aided where force was unavailing. Marshal Ney had detained the Russian officer who brought the summons, previous to the action on the Losmina, and now sent him back to his countrymen with proposals of surrender. This led to negotiations that continued till dark, when the Marshal again burst through the circle of surrounding enemies, and next morning effected his junction with the troops sent out from Orcha to his assistance. The courage and constancy displayed by Ney and his troops on this occasion are deserving of the highest praise, though it effected little more than preventing a Marshal of France from being captured: for of the 6000 men who left Smolensk, not above 300 reached Orcha.

Here Napoleon had again assembled all the divisions of his "Grand Army," now reduced to 12,000 effective men, and presenting only a spectral remnant of its former magnificence. During the short period of eight days since the departure from Smolensk, a diminution of 38,000 men from the effective strength had thus taken place: 26,000 had fallen into the hands of the Russians, who had also captured 228 pieces of artillery. Orcha afforded, however, some shelter and supplies to the troops. Magazines, and a depôt of horses, had been formed here: the town and surrounding hamlets had escaped destruction, and were inhabited; but were now completely sacked, and in a great part given to the flames by the troops. The weather, however, had be-

come milder, some partial relief was given to the suffering soldiers; a few, though few, stragglers were rallied round their colours, and thirty-six pieces of artillery were rendered moveable.

But the advantages derived from the supplies found at Orcha, were little able to counterbalance the fearful tidings that reached Napoleon the moment he crossed the Dnieper. From Oudinot and Victor news arrived that, worsted by Wittgenstein in a second action at Tchaschniki, they were falling back towards Borisow, followed by the victorious enemy. From beyond the Beresina disasters also were announced: Minsk, the principal depôt of the army, had been captured by Admiral Tchitchagoff, who was thus within a few short marches of Borisow on the Beresina, the sole point of retreat now left open to the remnants of the fugitive host. "Thus it is," said Napoleon in bitterness of heart, on hearing these tidings, "when we commit only fault upon fault." But with whom did these grave faults rest, except with himself?

And yet the loss of Minsk was but the forerunner of still more threatening disasters. The fall of this important post was no sooner known, than orders were despatched for General Dombrowski and Marshal Oudinot to cross the Beresina at Borisow, and retake it at all hazards; but these commands were already impracticable. The Russians, who had followed up their success, were no sooner in possession of Minsk than they advanced upon Borisow: and so careless had constant success rendered the French, that the old fortifications covering the important bridge, and which seemed almost to point out the necessity for taking measures of precaution, had not even been restored. A month had elapsed since the army commenced its retreat from Moscow, the com-

munication had generally been open, orders could have been sent at leisure, and strong works might have been constructed in half the time; but not a spade of earth had been turned up, nor a palisade planted: and now ruin, the consequence of such gross misconduct, seemed inevitable.

The Russians came on. Dombrowski's Poles had reached Borisow, and attempted to defend the bridge; but the first brigade of Tchitchagoff's army already drove them from the works, crossed the river along with the fugitives, and carried the town itself: all means of retreat seemed now lost to the French. "Is it then written there," said Napoleon, with a look of fury towards heaven, when he received these fearful tidings, "that we are to commit nothing but errors?" And never, since man pointed hostile arms against man, had graver and more palpable errors been committed in the guidance of a military enterprise. Not only had the depôts of a fainting and exhausted army been left unprotected in an open town, exposed to the attacks of the enemy; not only had the sole bridge of safety been left to fall, without the chance of effectual opposition, into the hands of fierce and numerous foes; but the very pontoons, which seemed alone capable of supplying the fatal loss, had, a few days before, been destroyed at Orcha by Imperial order, and the horses given to the artillery: the helpless mass, advancing to the Beresina, seemed marching to inevitable destruction.

Marshal Oudinot, in pushing forward to support Dombrowski, had indeed retaken Borisow, surprised Admiral Tchitchagoff, and dealt the unfortunate commander a blow that sent him reeling back across the river; but the Russians had destroyed the bridge in their retreat, so that nothing but the honour of victory, and the pos-

session of an empty town, was gained by this success; the situation of the conquerors seemed as desperate as before.

The French army, including the corps of Victor and Oudinot, had only 30,000 men effective round their eagles, and were encumbered with more than 40,000 unarmed stragglers; were oppressed by famine and sickness, and by all the evils that beset military bands when the ties of discipline and obedience are relaxed. In their front was the hostile river, its adverse banks lined with 30,000 Russians under Admiral Tchitchagoff; close upon their right was Count Wittgenstein, with an equal number of victorious troops. On the left was the road to Pultowa, the ominous deserts of the Ukraine; and on their retiring footsteps pressed General Yermalow, with 10,000 men, the advanced guard of Kutusoff who, with the main body of his forces, was only a day's march in the rear. Napoleon's ruin appeared inevitable; a petty stream, not eighty yards in breadth, seemed destined to close the career of him who, in his days of pride, had burst across the Alps, and forced the Danube itself, in the face of mighty foes. But fortune, like a perverse and partial mother, favoured the weak child of her affections, in proportion as his own incapacity rendered her aid more indispensable and more obviously undeserved. And what neither valour nor wisdom could have achieved without her direct interposition, was rendered comparatively easy by her active assistance.

The Beresina, flowing between marshy and wood-covered banks, offers few points where an army can force a passage, and continue its march after having achieved success. Accident pointed out to the French the best of these points. General Corbineaux's brigade of light cavalry, sent from Weleika by Marshal Wrede to rein-

force Oudinot's corps, observed a peasant passing the stream at the ford of Studzianka, and immediately followed him, and thus effected their junction with the French marshal. When the Russians, two days afterwards, destroyed the bridge of Borisow, attention was immediately turned to this ford, which, though already deepened by the prevailing thaw, was still in some degree practicable. It facilitated at least the construction of bridges, and Marshal Oudinot commanded them to be instantly commenced. Napoleon, informed of what was in progress, sent General Eblé with the *Pontoniers* to assist the work. This officer, one of the ablest engineers in Europe, had, by his own exertions, saved two field forges and six carts of tools from the destruction at Orcha, and it was on this slender supply of means to construct a bridge, that depended the safety of the mighty host which had so lately made Europe tremble.

At Borisow, Napoleon with his spectral bands joined the armies of Victor and Oudinot, who still retained their discipline and organization, and who were naturally struck with amazement on beholding the condition to which their former comrades were reduced. These once proud soldiers now filed past their happier countrymen, with squalid countenances, disfigured by filth, and blackened by the smoke of the bivouacs. The sack of pauperism replaced the arms which they had cast aside; their hair was matted and their beards filled with icicles. Thousands were shoeless, and their feet, where not protected by bundles of rags, pieces of felt, old hats or knapsacks, were bare and bleeding. Straw mats, hides, women's cloaks—in cases of good fortune pieces of fur, covered the tattered remains of former uniforms. There were Cuirassiers in ladies' pelisses, Grenadiers of the Guard in clerical robes, Hussars attired in the gowns of

Rabbins, Dragoons in the winter bonnets of Russian women, or whatever the chance of plunder had thrown into their hands. All colours, the costumes of all nations dwelling between the Vistula and the Caspian, appeared in this hideous procession of famished and half-frozen paupers; who, bent beneath the weight of suffering, moved along with fixed and downcast looks, as conscious of the disgust their very appearance occasioned. Every vestige of discipline was gone; the officers gave no command, for none was obeyed or attended to. A sense of common danger led them to keep together, and struggle forward, and mutual fatigue made them take repose by the same fires; but every semblance of an organized military force had vanished from their ranks. Some feeble divisions of the Old Guard, a few German battalions reduced to mere skeletons, alone remained round their colours; about two hundred mounted officers, formed into what was denominated "a sacred squadron," composed the Imperial escort.

Every species of stratagem was now devised for the purpose of deceiving Admiral Tchitchagoff, regarding the point where the passage of the river was to be attempted. Demonstrations were made in front of and below Borisow; but the Russians deceived themselves far more than the French could have done. From Minsk a report was received, that Prince Schwarzenberg was advancing upon that town; and a letter from Kutusoff, which reached the Admiral on the morning of the 25th, desired him to watch the river below Borisow, as Napoleon would turn to the left, avoid Wittgenstein's army, and try to effect his junction with the Austrians. There seemed something so plausible in this statement, which also agreed with the previous report from Minsk, that Tchitchagoff was completely misled, and recalled General

Tchaplitz, who was stationed opposite Studzianka; and who had already discovered the preparations made by the enemy on that point. A body of Cossacks, despatched across the river, had seen the whole French army assembled behind Studzianka; this he reported to the Admiral; but nothing could change the fixed idea of the seaman: and Tchaplitz was obliged to leave his post at the very moment when the French commenced the passage. His rear-guard fired a single gun at them, and it was the only resistance they experienced in an operation on which their very fate depended.

Three hundred men having crossed the stream on small rafts, the construction of the bridges was instantly set about, and carried on with all the skill and activity which distinguished the works of the French engineers during the war. In the afternoon of the 26th, two bridges, one for infantry and a stronger one for baggage and artillery, being completed, Marshal Oudinot's corps passed the river. One division was despatched to occupy the long wooden bridges leading over the marches to Zembin, and which the Russians had entirely neglected to destroy; the rest of the corps advanced to the heights of Breilowa, on the left of the bridges, to meet General Tchaplitz, who had counter-marched his troops, and was now advancing to oppose the passage: but he was too late for this purpose, and too feeble to repulse those by whom it had been effected. During the greater part of the 27th, the French were left unmolested; and at noon Napoleon with his Guards crossed the stream.

The war, which had slumbered for a while, now awakened on both banks: on the right, Tchitchagoff, who had joined Tchaplitz, attacked the troops of Oudinot; and on the left bank, Wittgenstein brought his forces into action. But he moved slowly; aware that the

Admiral had been driven back across the Beresina, that Kutusoff was at too great a distance to lend immediate support, and believing that Napoleon, after his junction with Victor and Oudinot, had still 80,000 or 90,000 men under his orders, he naturally feared to engage this fancied superiority. Instead of marching down on Studzianka, he passed in rear of the French, and threw himself into the Smolensk road, where he was sure to enter into communication with the other Russian commander: having effected this precautionary measure, he fell upon the rear-guard of the enemy's troops stationed at Borisow. He met with considerable success, and having defeated all who opposed him, forced the whole of General Partonneaux's division to lay down their arms. On the right bank the Russians had been less fortunate: a stubborn action had been fought, but no impression had been made on the French, who continued in full command of the bridges.

The double battle was again renewed on the 28th; and the French, contending for life and liberty, fought in gallant style though assailed by greatly superior numbers. On the right bank the Russians made no progress; but on the left they gradually pressed back Victor's corps, till their shot began to fall at last among the crowds of stragglers of all kinds that still thronged round the bivouac fires of Studzianka, whence no efforts had yet been able to dislodge them. The scene that followed will long hold a prominent place among the most frightful of those that darken the pages of history. The striking of the Russian shot no sooner forced upon these miserable beings the conviction of their danger, than all rushed in confusion to the river. Men, women, the wounded and the infirm, strove to force their headlong way through the thickening crowd that soon became

almost motionless and impassible, from the very pressure of the multitude. Many were trampled to death, others crushed beneath the wheels of carriages ; a greater number still hurled into the river, carrying down with them all to whom they clung in their agony. The Russian shot plunged thicker and thicker amidst the gory throng : thrice the bridges broke, and had to be repaired, and as often the yell of despair rose high above the roar of battle, and drowned even the voice of the storm that raged in fury above the wild scene of human strife, though unable to augment its manifold horrors.

When darkness came, Victor withdrew the feeble remnants of his gallant band across the river : the stragglers continued all night to throng the bridges, under the very fire of the Russian artillery, directed through the obscurity by the shrieks of dying and wounded sufferers, which rose to proclaim the fatal accuracy of every shot that told. " Thus you see," said Napoleon, when the passage was effected, " how we pass under the beards of the enemy."

On the morning of the 29th General Eblé set fire to the bridges, and all who then remained on the left bank fell into the hands of the Russians, who captured besides vast quantities of artillery, stores and baggage, belonging mostly to the corps of Victor and Oudinot. The loss sustained by the French has never been exactly known : Wittgenstein took 10,000 prisoners ; many also fell into the hands of Admiral Tchitchagoff, and Russian accounts assert, that when the ice of the Beresina melted away on the return of spring, 36,000 corpses were found in its bed. Allowing this to be a little exaggerated, it is still certain that vast numbers must have perished in the terrible contest ; for even ten years after the action, arms and implements of war were seen projecting from the

slime of the fatal Beresina. Time, as if to mark the scene of the memorable event, has since formed a small shrub-covered island in the river, exactly where the bridges stood; and a little lower down the bank, two hillocks, now overgrown with forget-me-nots, still continue to show the vast graves of the slain.

The passage of the Beresina, which, from the success of the operation and the gallantry displayed, the French are fully entitled to claim as a victory, was the last convulsive effort of the "Grand Army;" as a military body it was no more, and now existed but in name. During the night that followed the action, the frost returned with intense severity, and many who had escaped the enemy only reached the right bank to perish beneath the icy blast that pursued them. The Old Guard, the faithful and the brave, lost in this single night 1500 men, out of the 3500 that still remained around their eagles. Disorganization now became general, and extended to the corps of Oudinot and Victor: the village of Brailow, where the head-quarters were established, was pulled down for fuel; and it was with difficulty that Napoleon's own apartment could be saved from destruction. The retreat was resumed on the 29th, the disorganized mass taking the road by Zembin, Pleschtschenitse, Molodeczno, and Smorgoni, towards Wilna. The intense frost was now rapidly effecting what famine and the sword had left unexecuted; every bivouac was again marked by the corpses of hundreds who had perished around the fires, and the dead and the dying pointed out to the pursuers the road which the few survivors followed in their flight. By Larrey's account, the thermometer fell during this march to eighteen, and afterwards to twenty-eight degrees below the freezing point, indicating a temperature that could not fail to

prove ruinous to half-famished bands situated as the French were. But if destructive on one hand, it gave some respite on the other, and necessarily checked in a great measure the efforts of the pursuers: the Cossacks alone were now able to keep close on the footsteps of the fugitives.

And how did Napoleon support this change of fortune? Historians and biographers assure us that he bore the heavy calamity which had befallen him with manly fortitude, and never allowed his haughty and commanding spirit to sink beneath the appalling disasters which destroyed his gallant army. He affected not even to see them, and gave orders as if the different corps and divisions were still in a perfect state of efficiency. He silenced all who brought fatal news, by declining to hear details. "Why will you disturb my tranquillity?" "Why will you dispel my illusions?" were the words by which he generally interrupted the bearers of evil tidings; preserving on such occasions the cold and reserved demeanour that seems to have been usual to him when he was not on perfectly sure ground. This, however, is not the conduct of a great man struggling against adversity, under the circumstances in which Napoleon was placed; on the contrary, it is clearly and palpably the conduct of the detected empiric reduced to his last resource—avoiding to witness the failure of the deception by which he had attempted to impose on the credulity of others. Yet such has been the world's mental servility to the reputation of this man, that they have received these deplorable pieces of acting, or—if they will so have it—of still more dishonourable apathy, as proofs of manly greatness and fortitude!

A great man would have faced the frowns of fortune, instead of shrinking from their aspect with a degree of

spiritless resignation that has no parallel in history. A great man would not only have used every mental effort to avert or diminish the ruin which previous folly had occasioned,—he would have used every personal exertion, even to the last spark of vital power, to check the progress of evil, to arrest that fatal disorganization which tended so greatly to the destruction of the army. Though the rear of the rear-guard would have been his usual post, he would have been seen on every point of the line of march, cheering and encouraging the faint and the feeble, reproving the tardy and the worthless: his very hand would have been raised against those who set an example so injurious to others. Instead of this, Napoleon remained with his Guards and sacred squadron in the centre of a central column, and refused to have "his tranquillity disturbed by accounts of the sufferings to which his unhappy soldiers were exposed." "This day, Cæsar, thou shalt praise me dead or alive," were the words of the gallant centurion Crastinius to the "world's great victor," on the morning of the battle of Pharsalia. And all who know how inflammable are the materials of which the human heart is composed, and how much men will dare and suffer to merit the praise of those whom they look upon as their superiors, will know how much might have been effected by the personal exertions of the Emperor during this disastrous march.

The Russians pursued slowly, and left the French to melt away beneath the overwhelming evils which their leader had brought upon them: that the frost, however severe, was not of itself sufficient to destroy their army, is evident from the fact that the flanking corps, under M'Donald and Schwarzenberg, which were necessarily as much exposed to the cold as the main body under

Napoleon, remained in a perfect state of discipline to the last, and effected their retreat in good order, and with comparatively little loss.

It was from Molodeczno that the Emperor despatched the 29th bulletin,—the celebrated document in which, with every effort to conceal the truth, he yet announced to France and Europe the failure of his expedition, and the ruin of his army. Two days afterwards, he assembled the marshals at Smorgoni, and informed them of his intention to return to Paris. It was necessary, he said, to watch the motions of Austria and Prussia, and prepare at home the means of opening the next campaign in a manner worthy of the great nation. The army, he continued, was now in sight of Poland, and would find abundance of every thing at Wilna, and winter quarters ready for them beyond the Niemen. Having then given the command to Murat, who found none to command or to obey, he took a final leave of the remnants of his host. Accompanied by Caulaincourt, whose name he assumed, he set off in a sledge at ten o'clock at night. Two other vehicles of the same kind followed; they contained, besides two officers of rank, Rustan the Mameluke, and one domestic—

> "So Xerxes sped, so speed the conquering race:
> They grasp at glory, and they catch—disgrace."

After having narrowly escaped being taken by the Russian partisan Seslavin, the fugitive reached Warsaw on the 10th December. Here the Abbé de Pradt, the French Ambassador to the Diet, was in the act of answering one of the Duke of Basano's letters when a tall phantom-like figure, wrapped in furs, stiffened by hoar frost, entered the apartment, supported by one of the Secretaries. It was the Duke of Vicenza.

"You here, Caulaincourt!" said the astonished Ambassador;—"and where is the Emperor?"

"At the Hôtel d'Angleterre, waiting for you."

"Why not stop at the Palace?"

"He travels incognito."

"Do you want any thing?"

"Some Burgundy and Malaga."

"All is at your service; but where are you going in this manner?"

"To Paris."

"To Paris! but where is the army?"

"It exists no longer," said Caulaincourt, looking upwards.

"And the victory of the Beresina, and the six thousand prisoners?"

"We got across, that is all: the prisoners were a few hundred men who have escaped. We had other business on hand than to look after them."

Thus conversing they reached the hôtel. In the yard stood three sledges in a dilapidated condition. One for the Emperor and Caulaincourt, the two others for the attendants already mentioned. The Abbé was introduced into a bad inn's bad room, where a female servant was blowing a fire made of green wood, which gave far more smoke than heat. Here was the Emperor whom the Ambassador had last seen playing the King of Kings, amid the assembled sovereigns at Dresden. He was dressed in a superb green pelisse covered with gold lace and lined with furs, and was walking briskly up and down the room, to obtain the warmth the chimney refused. He saluted "*Monsieur l'Ambassadeur*," as he termed the Archbishop, with gaiety; but evidently repelled by his manner a movement of sensibility to which the latter seemed disposed

to give way. "The poor man did not understand me," says the historian, who limited his devotion to assisting the Emperor in taking off his cloak.

"Well, and how do you get on in this country?" proceeded the fugitive. The reply led to a sad picture of the situation of the duchy, which evidently displeased him; he therefore took up the discourse himself, and having continued it for some time, dismissed the ambassador, desiring him to return after dinner with the two principal Secretaries of State.

When the parties were admitted on the termination of the Imperial repast, the Polish gentlemen expressed their happiness at seeing him so well after the many dangers he had escaped.

"Dangers!" he replied, "none in the world. I live in agitation; the more I bustle the better I am. It is for Kings of Cockaigne to fatten in their palaces: the field and the saddle for me. From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a single step."

"Why do I find you so much alarmed here?"

"We are at a loss to gather the truth of the news from the army."

"Bah!" replied the Emperor; "the army is in a superb condition. I have 120,000 men. I beat the Russians in every action: they are no longer the soldiers of Friedland and Eylau. The army will recruit at Wilna: I am going to bring up 300,000 men: success will render the Russians fool-hardy: I will give them battle twice or thrice upon the Oder, and in a month I shall again be on the Niemen. I have more weight on my throne than at the head of the army. I certainly quit my soldiers with regret; but I must watch Austria and Prussia; and I have more weight seated on my throne than at the head of my

army. All that has happened goes for nothing.—a mere misfortune in which the enemy can claim no merit. I beat them everywhere; they wished to cut me off at the Beresina: I made a fool of that ass of an admiral: I had good troops and cannon; the position was superb: 500 toises of march: a river." This he repeated several times, then ran over the distinction in the 29th bulletin, between men of strong and feeble minds, and proceeded:—"I have seen worse affairs than this: at Marengo I was beaten till six o'clock in the evening; next day I was master of Italy. At Essling that Arch-Duke tried to stop me. He published something or other: my army had already advanced a league and a half. I did not even condescend to make any disposition: all the world knows how such things are managed when I am in the field. I could not help the Danube rising sixteen feet in one night. Ah! without that there would have been an end of the Austrian monarchy. But it was written in heaven that I should marry an Arch-Duchess." This was said with an air of much gaiety. "In the same manner in Russia, I could not prevent its freezing. They told me every morning that I had lost ten thousand horses during the night." "Well, farewell to you."

He bade them farewell five or six times during the harangue, but always returned to the subject. "Our Norman horses are less hardy than those of Russia: they sink under ten degrees of cold. It is the same with the men. Look at the Bavarians; there is not one left. Perhaps it will be said that I stopped too long at Moscow: that may be true, but the weather was fine,—the winter came on prematurely, and I expected peace. On the 5th of October I sent Lauriston to treat. I thought of going to Petersburg, or to

the south of Russia, and had time enough to do so. Well, we shall make head at Wilna: Murat is there. Ha, ha, ha! it is a great political game; nothing venture, nothing win. There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. The Russians have character. The Emperor Alexander is beloved by the people. They have clouds of Cossacks. It is something to have such an empire. The peasants of the crown are attached to their government: the nobles are all on horseback. They proposed to me to set the slaves at liberty: but that I would not consent to—they would have massacred every one. I made regular war on the Emperor Alexander; but who could have expected such a blow as the burning of Moscow? Now they would lay it on us; but it was in fact their own doing. That sacrifice would have done honour to ancient Rome."

He returned several times to his favourite project of checking the Russians, before whom the whole of his Grand Army had melted down, by raising 10,000 Polish Cossacks, "a horse and a lance," he said, "being sufficient to make a Cossack."

The conversation continued in this manner for three hours. The fire went out, and the councillors listened in frozen despair, while the Emperor kept himself warm by walking up and down the room, and by the energy with which he uttered the strange and unconnected monologue we have related. On taking leave, he replied to the wishes of the party for his continued health, that "he could not possibly be better even if the devil were in him." With these words he entered the humble sledge that "carried Cæsar and his fortune."

"Such," says the Abbé de Pradt, "was this celebrated conversation, in which Napoleon displayed his

adventurous and incoherent genius, his cold insensibility, and his unsettled ideas, fluctuating between ten diverging plans; in which he laid bare his past projects, as well as his future dangers.

In our estimation, the conversation places the French Emperor in a very unfavourable light indeed: for he appears totally destitute of the dignity which could enable him to face a great misfortune with the calm and lofty bearing that beseems the man of lofty station and character. He affects indifference, where it is discreditable; and represses all appearance of feeling, where feeling would have been honourable; and treats the most overwhelming disaster that ever befell an army, with a degree of levity displaying only the bad acting of a person wishing to conceal deep and bitter mortification and a dread of ridicule, beneath an exterior recklessness of manner bordering very closely on vulgarity. He dared not be frank and open before his own ministers, though constantly betraying sentiments he wished to conceal; and was at the same time trying to deceive those who could only render efficient service by being well informed of the exact position of affairs.

Resuming his journey, Napoleon reached Dresden on the 14th December; and having held a conference with the good old King of Saxony, who came to visit at an inn the former lordly occupant of his palace, again set forward, and continuing his incognito through Germany, arrived at the Tuileries late on the 18th, after the inmates had retired to rest. He was not immediately known, and entered the ante-chamber of the Empress to the confusion of her attendants; who at length recognised him with a cry of joy that roused Maria Louisa from her slumbers. Their meeting is, of course, said to have been affectionate: subsequent events necessarily

make us doubt the fact: but were it otherwise, and had their meeting been as tender as romance could depict, it would still be of slight import: for there is unfortunately nothing in the character of the lady which can make her attachment redound to the honour of her lord; though the attachment of a generous and noble-minded woman must always grace the man on whom it is bestowed.

The fate of the army, abandoned by its chief, is soon told. The divisions of Wrede, Loison, and Maison, came successively to its aid; but these troops, so far from affording support, only shared in the general disorganization. The Bavarians alone remained in a state of discipline till they reached the gates of Wilna; and there the bonds of subordination which had held them together also gave way; and, like the rest, they ceased to be soldiers. Vast stores of every description had been collected at this place; but want of proper arrangement prevented regular distributions from being made: the magazines were consequently broken open by the famished multitudes, who helped themselves; and the town soon presented the same disgraceful scene of riot and plunder that Smolensk had done before. The soldiers forced their way into the houses of the inhabitants; and many are said to have been murdered by the Lithuanian Jews, as soon as the *hurrah* of the Cossacks told that the pursuers were at hand.

And they followed fast upon the fugitives. The rear-guard of the French reached Wilna on the 9th, and already brought Platoff and Tchaplitz with them in their train. On the ensuing morning the town was evacuated, and with such precipitation that all the stores which had not been plundered by the French themselves, were allowed to fall into the hands of the

Russians: 20,000 men, sick, wounded, or exhausted, unable and unwilling, after so much suffering, to make any further effort for life or liberty, became captives. With about 2000 soldiers of the garrison of Wilna, the undaunted Ney still formed the rear-guard. Arrived at a steep and now ice-sleeted defile called Ponari, it became necessary to abandon all the baggage that still remained to the troops. The money of the military chest which had been brought from Wilna, Marshal Ney very properly distributed among the soldiers, thinking that it was better in their hands than in the hands of the Cossacks. In doing so, he acted a more rational part than the British commander on the retreat to Corunna, who, unable to bring along some treasure, ordered it to be thrown over the rocks of Nogalis, where it was soon gathered up by the enemy, rather than give it to the soldiers, to whom it might have been of some benefit: but in those days, a favour conferred upon British soldiers would almost have been looked upon as a crime. Count Segur, in his foolish way of writing, tells the reader that the private treasure of the Emperor was intrusted to the soldiers of the Guard, and that every piece of gold was restored by these gallant men: not a single piece, he says, was missing. Unfortunately for this pretty story, there was no private treasure belonging to the Emperor, as Gourgaud very frankly acknowledges; and if there had been, the men of the Guard who were slain or captured between Wilna and the Oder, could hardly have restored the money intrusted to their care: nor was it likely that the Cossacks would do so for them. It is right at times to point out such exaggerations, to show what the historians of Napoleon are capable of asserting.

At last Murat, with his ghastly band, reached the

Niemen, exactly where, five months before, the "Grand Army" had passed in all the pomp of war and pride of anticipated victory. And now how changed! Two kings, one prince, eight marshals, officers on foot without attendants, nine guns, a few hundred men of the Old Guard still in arms, together with 20,000 pale, famished, and rag-covered objects, hardly retaining the appearance of human beings, were all that remained of former strength, splendour, and magnificence! Even the rear-guard had melted away; Marshal Ney arrived at Kowno with only a few staff officers. Here he found a garrison of seven companies, of whom he assumed the command. But at the first appearance of the Cossacks a panic seized these recruits; and the Marshal, with his officers, had literally to take the muskets thrown away by the soldiers, and keep the advancing enemy at bay, till some of the men, shamed by the intrepid conduct of their chief, again rallied to his call. Thus supported, the dauntless Ney maintained his post till night, and then, under cover of the darkness, retired across the river, and withdrew the last two hundred men of the Grand Army from the fatal soil of Russia.*

Let us now see what befell the flanking corps.

Admiral Tchitchagoff's march towards Minsk had no sooner become known, than Prince Schwarzenberg was pressingly *invited* by the Duke of Bassano to follow the Russian movement in the same direction. Though it

* General Dumas tells us that he had just sat down to breakfast at Gumbinnen when a man in a brown coat, long beard, red eyes, and weather-beaten face, entered, saying, "At last I am here: General Dumas, do you not know me?" "No; who are you?" "I am the rear-guard of the Grand Army. I have fired the last musket-shot on the bridge of Kowno, I have thrown the last of our arms into the Niemen, and have come here through the woods.—I am Marshal Ney."

was evident that the important post could no longer be saved by an army distant from it two hundred miles, and which had besides a hostile force in its front, the Austrian general advanced, nevertheless, with the utmost speed, and had already reached Slonim, when he received an order from the Emperor, dated 4th December, directing him to "follow the movements of the Grand Army, and manœuvre in the spirit of existing circumstances." What these circumstances were, the General who was to be guided by them was not told; on the contrary, an attempt was even made to deceive him by an exaggerated account of the passage of Beresina, which was described as a brilliant victory achieved by the French. Austrian officers, however, who had seen the situation to which the "Grand Army" was reduced, soon brought more accurate tidings; and Schwarzenberg, convinced that nothing could be gained by risking his small force, fell back and covered Warsaw. Having obtained honourable terms for that capital, he concluded a truce with the Russian commander, who had orders to enter, if possible, into arrangements with the Austrians, and then withdrew his army into Galicia. Prince Schwarzenberg has been praised by German writers for his conduct during the campaign; and though it is not in our province to enter into the details of his operations, we may safely assert that the accusations of treachery so liberally preferred against him by French authors, are totally destitute of foundation. A mere examination of dates and distances renders this indeed perfectly clear; and even Napoleon's own evidence confirms it: for the Emperor not only praised the Austrian operations, and received the Prince in a friendly manner when he afterwards went on a mission to Paris, but recommended

him for the *baton* of field-marshal which was conferred upon him for his conduct during this very campaign.

In the North, events of a more decisive character had taken place.

In effecting his own escape, Napoleon had entirely forgotten M'Donald's corps. A Prussian officer arriving, however, from Wilna, brought intelligence of the dissolution of the Grand Army, and of the Emperor's departure for France: but as the information was not official, the Marshal, who was on bad terms with the Prussian commander, refused to credit the strange tale; and it was not till the 18th of December, when the wrecks of the mighty host had already repassed the Niemen, that he received orders to retire. By this time the operation had become one of difficulty; for Wittgenstein's army was in full march to intercept his retreat, and the Russian advanced guard under General Diebitch actually interposed between his leading division and the main body of his forces, composed of Prussians under General Yorck. From the relative position of the Russian and Prussian corps, this last division was in some danger of being cut off; a circumstance that furnished General Yorck with an apparent excuse for the very decided step he ventured upon; though it was well known that such a danger would not have intimidated a man of his resolute character, had not other motives influenced his conduct.

General Yorck was one of the bravest and most distinguished officers in the Prussian service; he was a man of great ambition and ability, keenly hostile to the French, and who, under a calm exterior, concealed a fiery but not very amiable disposition. He had been purposely recommended for his post by the celebrated Colonel Scharnhorst, who foresaw that events might

occur which would call for the display of all these peculiar qualities. Nor was he mistaken. When General Diebitch interposed between M'Donald and the Prussians, Yorck, who could no longer receive orders from his superior, and was thus rendered, to a certain extent, independent, readily listened to the proposals of the Russian commander, to enter into a friendly arrangement with the former allies of his country, and thus save all needless effusion of blood. Every feeling that could influence a man of General Yorck's character urged him to take such a step. Of unamiable disposition, he was on bad terms with Marshal M'Donald, whose engaging manners would have secured the friendship of almost every other man in the army, and was bound, therefore, by no ties of personal attachment to his commander. Ambitious, fiery, and enterprising, he willingly seized the opportunity of rising to distinction, by taking a bold and decisive step; hating the French, he was anxious to free his country from their oppressive alliance; and endowed with high talents, he saw the vast effect which the separation of the Prussian army from their cause would necessarily produce at such a moment.

Without any secret authority or instructions, and entirely on his own responsibility, he concluded an armistice with General Diebitch. According to this deed, signed at Poscherun on the 30th December, the Prussian troops were to be cantoned in their own country, and remain neutral for two months. At the expiration of that period they were to be at liberty again to join the French, if their sovereign so determined. The leading brigade, under General Masenbach, which had accompanied the advanced division under Marshal M'Donald's own orders, no sooner heard of the transac-

tion, than they immediately countermarched, and joined their countrymen.

And never, perhaps, had the altered position of a small corps of only 15,000 men produced such important results as those to which this convention gave rise. General Hendelet's division of infantry, General Carvignoc's brigade of cavalry, were already on the march to join Marshal M'Donald's corps; General Bülow commanded 10,000 men in East Prussia, and their aid could hardly have been refused to defend their own country against the common enemy, had the French and Prussian alliance continued. These troops combined, would have presented an army of 40,000 effective men; a force that Wittgenstein, in the reduced state of his corps, could not have encountered; nor would Kutusoff, whose opinions on the subject were well known, have sanctioned the passage of the Niemen, in the face of such numerous adversaries. The convention of Poscherun removed all these difficulties; Kutusoff gave a reluctant consent to the passage of the Niemen, when all appearance of opposition had vanished. The Russians advanced into Prussia, obliged the French to seek shelter behind the Oder, and thus gave the first impulse to the great rising of nations that followed.

In this manner ended the invasion of Russia; a military enterprise undertaken with the greatest means ever employed for the purposes of war, and conducted with a want of judgment and ability exceeding any of which history makes mention. The power at the disposal of the aggressor trebled the forces of the assailed; to the last hour of the contest, his name and fame continued to weigh heavily in the balance against his enemies. All the usual elements of conquest were on his side: wealth, resources, numbers; the science, skill, and confidence of his subordinates; the courage conferred by years of

victory—and victory even over the very foes to be encountered. And yet, with these boundless and almost decisive advantages, the result was the most disastrous ever experienced in war, and accompanied by the most overwhelming disgrace that ever settled on the brow of a discomfited commander.

"What then," says Sir Walter Scott, "occasioned this most calamitous catastrophe? We venture to reply, that a moral error, or rather a crime, converted Napoleon's wisdom into folly."

But why suppose the existence of wisdom, where the result of folly only is apparent? We readily admit, that crime may convert even wisdom to folly; but not in cases similar to the one here stated. The force of passion, which by sudden burst obtains occasional mastery over minds of some strength and elevation, may for brief moments convert wisdom to folly. But the empire of folly thus engendered is of the shortest duration; and cannot, where wisdom exists, continue to hold it in subjection, least of all when objects demanding its exertions are constantly and for a long period of time pressing themselves upon the mind: we could as soon suppose that the constant application of fire would fail to ignite inflammable materials. The attack on Russia must not be compared to the mere burst of passion which prompts a man to draw his sword, and call an adversary to take his ground. It was, on the contrary, an enterprise that required months, nay years perhaps, of laborious arrangement. The troops that composed the vast army assembled on the Niemen had been brought from the most remote parts of France, Italy, and Germany; and the calculations necessary for combining their marches, for placing them in quarters, forming them into corps, brigades, and divisions, supplying each and all with the

requisite proportion of artillery, ammunition, and material, demanded long and toilsome application, and the constant superintendence of an all-directing superior. These duties of detail did not perhaps call for the display of either wisdom or genius; but they called for that degree of cool and deliberate attention to important calculations and combinations, which would prevent wisdom from lying dormant at the very time when many of its constituent parts were in active operation. According to our view, it is therefore impossible to suppose that the mind which projected the invasion of Russia, on the plan adopted by Napoleon, could have been endowed with enlightened wisdom or judgment.

Napoleon had before committed crimes as great and greater perhaps than the attack on Russia; but they were not supposed to have turned his wisdom to folly while victory swelled the gale. It was only when success forsook his standard that the world, which had taken fortune for genius, found it necessary to fall upon these sudden devices, to accouut for the glaring want of talent rendered so strikingly apparent.

The very contemplation of the maps, which required to be consulted day after day while the expedition was preparing, would have pointed out to ordinary observation the difficulties that were certain to be encountered.* The latitude of the regions to be invaded, the distance to be traversed, and the small number of towns and hamlets scattered over the wide extent of country, told that a severe climate would have to be endured, where precarious shelter and little food could be obtained for

* As a proof of the pains bestowed on the arrangements of all the mere technical details, we may here mention, that a new map of Russia was actually engraved for the service of the army. There being at that time no very special survey of the country, Podoroschna's map was enlarged and translated into French.

the countless multitude of which the army would necessarily be composed. All these evils were certain to be encountered, but not a single one was effectually guarded against; and from the very outset of the expedition they already exercised the most fatal influence on the troops. During the first marches, men and horses perished in great numbers; and long before the army reached the Dnieper, disorder had attained a height, that plainly foretold what the result of protracted operations would prove.

Napoleon, however, saw nothing but a repetition of what he had seen before: a victory, and the capture of the hostile capital, had always ensured the submission of his enemies; and he considered that the same advantages gained, would necessarily be attained with the same consequences: and, deceived in this expectation, he was so completely defeated as not to have a single resource left. That the enemy might continue to resist after the capture of Moscow, was a casualty far beyond the reach of his narrow vision: for narrow, indeed, the vision must have been, which could not perceive that the Russians would strive to seize the victory he thus placed within their grasp. Nothing happened during the whole course of the expedition that should have taken soldiers of talents and experience by surprise. There was no treachery, no desertion, no defeat in the field, no particular error on the part of subordinate commanders. Fortune, the constant intermeddler in military affairs, long remained passive, and allowed her spoiled and favoured child a fair trial of his strength; he was found completely wanting: and it was only by her speedy and especial aid, that he was saved at last from total destruction on the banks of the Beresina.

The idolaters of Napoleon assert that he could not

have foreseen the burning of Moscow and the early arrival of the winter, the true and only causes of his failure. We have shown, we hope, that the destruction of Moscow did not in the slightest degree influence the result of the expedition; and the nature of a Russian winter could hardly be unknown to any one. And so far from the season having been particularly severe, the result of thirteen years' observations shows, that the average temperature during the month of November, the month in which Napoleon's army was destroyed, is much more severe than it was in the year 1812. In December the cold became intense; but the work of ruin had already been accomplished: as a military body, the army then no longer existed. That the cold alone did not occasion its destruction, is proved by the fact that the flanking corps effected their retreat in good order, and at a later period of the season, during the intense cold of December, and when the Grand Army was already reduced to a feeble band of wretched, unarmed, and rag-covered stragglers. But had the case been different; had the cold and the burning of Moscow destroyed the army, they could not have justified the conduct of Napoleon; because they were naturally within the range of ordinary possibilities. "No great commander," says Iphicrates, "can justify failure on the plea that he was not prepared for the causes by which it was occasioned."

Kutusoff and the Russian commanders have been greatly blamed for the tardy and inefficient manner in which the pursuit was conducted: Russian officers complained of this at the time, and certainly not without cause. It is now well known, that if the pursuers had evinced more energy, the French army could have been destroyed either at Krasnoe or at the Beresina, where

the remnants might easily have been made to pass beneath the Caudine forks. But the Russians were not then so well aware of the situation of the French as we are now, and could never conjecture the state of misery to which their "Grand Army" was reduced; for it was not easy to discover what proportion of the mass was armed and what unarmed. When the corps of Victor and Oudinot had formed their junction with the main body on the Beresina, it was supposed that the effective force still amounted to 90,000 men, though not a third of that number were really under arms. And a French army of such strength, led by Napoleon, could hardly fail to inspire Kutusoff, the vanquished commander of Austerlitz, with respect. It was, in fact, Napoleon's name and fame,—the reputation of his troops, his marshals, his guards,—which saved him, and certainly no display of genius or of soldiership. Kutusoff feared to be defeated by him at Krasnoe, even as Wittgenstein laboured under the same dread at the Beresina. And as both saw that ultimate victory was certain without risk, they preferred to gather up the fruit that fell slowly into their hands, rather than encounter danger, by striving hastily for more splendid success. "All yon host will melt away without me," was Kutusoff's invariable reply to those who pressed for the adoption of bolder measures: nothing moved the aged commander from his fixed purpose, nor could the gallant spirit of Sir Robert Wilson awaken one spark of noble daring in his time-chilled heart.

Something, however, may be said in favour of this mode of proceeding. The ruin of the French army was already certain: the most complete catastrophe could only throw a few marshals, and some more general officers, into the hands of the Russians; and for this, it was not,

perhaps, worth exposing the army to any serious loss. That Napoleon's defeat in Russia would lead to important changes, was evident; and it, therefore, became a great object for Kutusoff to appear on the frontier with a force capable of giving Russia an influential voice in the future settlement of affairs. This was good ground for sparing the troops, who had suffered severely from the winter campaign, though their commander declared with some apparent contradiction, that not a single Russian soldier should cross the Niemen. On the other hand, the vast moral effect that would have been produced by the complete overthrow of the French army in an open battle-field, was entirely lost by this cautious system of strategy. Napoleon could say, and say truly, that he had never been defeated by the Russians; and his servile supporters readily declared that he was still unconquered, and had been vanquished only by the elements. The idolaters forgot indeed to add, that it was the presumptuous incapacity of the leader which had alone exposed the host to the relentless fury of the storm.

As a back-ground to this feeble sketch of the campaign, we shall here give Arndt's account of the appearance of Wilna, five weeks after the expulsion of the French. It will help the reader to form some idea of the frightful amount of human woe which the line of this memorable retreat must have presented.

The author left Petersburg in company with Count Stein, and proceeds thus: "After passing the Düna, we found ourselves in the country which had been the theatre of war, and the marks of devastation became more and more evident at every step as we approached Wilna. We had to gaze upon unroofed, half-ruined houses, on the desolate remains of dwellings destroyed by fire;

all empty, all deserted: not even a cat was heard to mew within the walls. The post-horses were meagre and half-starved; so completely were the poor diminutive Lithuanian steeds exhausted, that we were obliged to halt and allow them some rest at every hill or rising piece of ground, though we had placed our carriages on sledges to which six or eight horses were sometimes harnessed. Alas! we had but too much leisure, during our journey over these snow-covered wastes, to reflect on the misery occasioned by this single campaign. What did we see? Oh, could a proud conqueror but weep as he makes the mothers of hundreds of thousands weep! On the second, third, and fourth day of our journey, we constantly fell in with parties of prisoners whom guards were conducting farther east, farther inland. And what objects: torn, rag-covered, discoloured, horse-flesh devourers, that hardly retained the appearance of human beings; and many of whom expired even before our eyes in villages and post-houses. The sick and wounded were heaped on straw, one above the other, in sledges; and when one died, he was immediately thrown out upon the snow without the least ceremony. Numbers lay dead, naked and unburied along the road: no human eye had wept over their last suffering. Many were covered with blood; and many of the slain were placed, as frightful sign-posts, against the trees. Dead horses and the mangled bodies of the slain marked the road to Wilna; none, not even the most ignorant, could have missed it. Our horses often snorted and reared when obliged to pass between, or to spring over, such objects. But this was not owing so much to the dead bodies as to the wolves, whom we often saw in droves of ten or fifteen, occupied with their prey, or stealing across the road only a few paces before us.

"On the 11th of January we arrived at Wilna, and

next day, after the minister Von Stein had departed, I went out to look at the town. It appeared to me something like Tartarus ; every where filth and stench ; filthy Jews, and a few unfortunate prisoners, mostly wounded or convalescents, were alone wandering about. A heavy smoke thickened the atmosphere ; for fires, often fed by vile litter and manure, were burning night and day before every house, in order to dispense the pestilential infections caused by so many crowded hospitals. Scattered about the streets lay French cockades, soiled plumes, torn hats and chacos, all trodden in the dust of humility, as a contrast to the haughtiness of those who, five months before, had strutted with them through Wilna in very different guise.

" I went out of the gate, and sauntered for a couple of frightful hours through the suburbs leading to Kowno and Wilkormirz. What horrors! all the signs I had witnessed in the city augmenting at every step ; here and there a naked corpse, dead horses, oxen, dogs, the faithful and unfortunate companions of the victims of this overwhelming disaster. Many houses were altogether empty, without roofs, floors, doors, or windows, mere wrecks in fact.

" A few cadaverous prisoners and convalescents were moving about among these monuments of destruction ; and by some dead wall a poor, famished, shrivelled and forsaken horse might be seen striving to pick up some handfuls of hay.

" On my way back to the city, I fell in with a genteel young man whom I addressed. He was a Belgian, and head-surgeon to an hospital of French prisoners, established in a neighbouring convent. I accompanied him into the outer hall of misery, saw the whole cemetery filled with corpses, and immediately turned. He told

me, that of 2000 patients, 50 or 80 died every day; this will soon lighten work.

"As I approached the gate, I met fifty or sixty sledges filled with corpses cleared out from the hospitals and public places. Meagre, worn, seamed with the marks of vermin and hardened by frost, they were heaped like dried wood on the sledges, and would afford but slender food for the worms and fishes to whom they were about to be consigned; for many were thrown into the river through holes broken in the ice. It was a sight of woe indeed; the remains of men,—of those who had been received with delight and joy at their birth, who had been reared in love and affection, till torn in the bloom of youth from friends and parents by a wild conqueror—to be treated in a manner so brutal. To be dragged without decency to the grave; with legs projecting towards heaven, with heads trailing on the ground, without a particle of covering to screen what modesty and humanity always strive to hide.

"On the 13th, the warm sun and fine weather tempted me to walk out along the banks of the river. Beyond the gate lay broken waggons, gun-carriages, caps, cockades, corpses, and dead horses. Most of the dead bodies had, indeed, been removed; but many, on whom the wolves had already feasted, were still lying behind bushes and heaps of stones. Below, on the frozen stream, sledges were conveying naked corpses, and every description of filth, away from the city. Walking on, I entered the wide court of a large building which, splendid stables, and the remains of tapestry and decorations, proved to have been the dwelling of the wealthy and the high of rank. Everything was broken and destroyed; most of the floors were torn up or burnt; old bones, hats, remnants of uniforms lay scattered about; and, at a

fire-place, a half-consumed corpse met my eyes. Its poor inhabitant had probably crawled for warmth to the fire, as worms crawl to the light, lost all sense of feeling, and then perished in the flames. The sight made me shudder, and I fled from the scene of desolation, as if I had encountered a spectral apparition in full day light.

"But worse remained. A crowd attracted my attention in the evening, and I went out. Having witnessed the arrival of some Russian Landwher, and observed the Polish peasantry and Lithuanian Jews, I followed the sound of choral music that fell upon my ear, and reached the Minsk gate, above which divine service was performing. I listened for a time, and then, on my return, entered a small wicket that led into a cemetry. At first I observed only the church and the second floor windows—or apertures rather, for windows there were none—of a building that ran round a part of the church-yard, and might be a college or convent. And what did I behold! the dead piled upon the dead; in some places to such a height as actually to reach the windows of the second floor. There were at least a thousand corpses, evidently late inmates of an hospital that death had cleared out! In the wide buildings there was not a human being, not a window,—a dog only was seen scratching at one of the doors. The severe frost had fortunately arrested the progress of decay, or the exhalations would otherwise have rendered the whole district uninhabitable. Many of the sanguinary battles fought in France and Germany may, no doubt, have caused as many dead bodies to be collected; but it required Polish management, and a year like the dreadful year 1812, to present them in such horrible spectacles to the human eye. I had, however, no right to be surprised; for at the first hôtel in town, our sledge was actually standing on

the frozen corpse of a French soldier, which still lay in full uniform, beneath the straw and litter of the shed. So great was the misery of the times, so inhumanly careless had men become, and so enormous was here the filth."*

Such was the station at which, according to Napoleon, Murat was to find all the comforts of winter quarters prepared for the 80,000 men of the "Grand Army," whom he was ordered to assemble!

In Spain also, the tide of fortune had turned against the French. Lord Wellington having captured the forts of Salamanca, which Marshal Marmont failed to relieve, followed the retiring enemy to the banks of the Douro. Finding the enemy's position near Valladolid too strong to be forced, he was falling back towards the frontiers of Portugal, when the French, emboldened by his retrograde movement, attempted to turn his right flank, and intercept his march towards Ciudad Rodrigo. This led to the battle of Salamanca, fought on the 22d of July, and in which the French were entirely defeated and driven from the field, leaving 7000 prisoners in the hands of the victors. Nor did their losses end here; for the rear-guard, having next morning been overtaken near Garci-Hermandez, was completely overthrown: and as this action shows the fallacy of one of the most approved military maxims then entertained, we shall here venture to describe it at some length.

On the morning after the battle, a strong rear-guard of the enemy, consisting, besides cavalry and artillery, of four regiments of infantry, was found posted near the village of Garci-Hermandez. These troops stood upon

* Erinnerungen aus dem äussen Leben von Ernst Moritz Arndt. Leipzig, 1842.

high, steep, and shingly ground;—the infantry were on the right, the cavalry on the left, the artillery in the centre. Two brigades of British cavalry, General Anson's light brigade, and the heavy brigade of the King's German Legion, were advancing toward the point occupied by the French. Their march through a ravine, formed by low and stony hills; the road at the bottom of which was not only broken, but so narrow that the cavalry could only advance by threes, being forced besides to make frequent halts in front to enable the rear of the column to close up.

On issuing from the defile, General Anson's brigade immediately took ground to the right, in order to gain room for its own formation, as well as to make way for the troops that followed; a movement which was not the least impeded by the enemy, who gave the attacking forces full leisure to make every possible preparation.

When the head of the heavy brigade reached the outlet of the pass, General Bock received orders to attack; and immediately commanded the regiments of his own brigade to form up in consequence. But no sooner was the first squadron in line than, without giving the others time to join, he placed himself, with all his staff, at its head, and led it right gallantly against the French cavalry, while the rest of his troops were still struggling through the defile. The French horsemen, already turned and partly thrown by Anson's brigade, did not wait the charge, but fled the field. Their guns they contrived to carry along with them, but the infantry was left to the care of Providence and modern tactics; and it was owing to the mercy of the former that some of the soldiers escaped to attest the value of the latter.

The flight of the French cavalry brought the infantry into play; and two regularly-formed squares were soon discovered to the left of where the cavalry had passed in

their charge; one of these had even opened a smart fire on General Bock's first squadron, but without arresting its progress or changing its direction. When, however, the other two squadrons of the first regiment had got formed, it was observed to Captain Von Deken, who commanded the third or left squadron, that he would probably suffer some loss from the fire of the nearest French square already mentioned. "If I am to suffer the loss," said this gallant officer, "I will reap the benefit also;" and no sooner had he reached to the level of the height on which the enemy were posted, than, wheeling to the left, he galloped right down upon them. Arrived within about a hundred yards of the foe, a volley fired by two ranks, killed him and brought down a good many of the men; but Captain Gleichen instantly replaced his fallen leader, and the charge proceeded. Within some forty yards of the square, a second, though less destructive volley was received. It arrested not the troops; but when they arrived at the points of the bayonets, doubts, and a moment's hesitation seemed to ensue: it was only of an instant's duration, but it was perilous nevertheless. To plunge, sword in hand, into the midst of the dark and compact mass of foes bristling with presented bayonets, seemed at first an action above ordinary daring. Hesitation would have brought defeat in its train: but some shots were fired, a horse fell, and rolled with its rider in among the throng; this gave a forward impulse to the rest—a single dash of spurs was then sufficient to ensure victory—the entire of the infantry were instantly ridden over, captured or sabred.

Captain Riegenstein, who commanded the second squadron, finding that the French cavalry had already been defeated, and hearing of the gallant and successful charge made on one square of their infantry, proceeded

immediately to attack the other, which was as completely thrown as the first, and with considerably less loss: a brave example once set, soon finds followers.

While these combats were going on, the 2d regiment of heavy dragoons had formed at the foot of the hill, where it remained in reserve. But some French cavalry having, after the dispersion of the squares, again shown themselves on the high ground, probably with a view to collect or protect the fugitives, this reserve ascended the height, attacked and threw these fresh adversaries. In following up this success, the third squadron, under Captain Marshalk, together with half of the second squadron, came upon a third square of infantry. Victory ruled the hour, and these new foes were no sooner discovered than charged and broken. The same troops immediately afterwards, fell upon a fourth square, which they also attacked. But here bravery was foiled; and this last charge failed, owing not merely to the exhausted state of the horses and the reduced number of men, but to the high and difficult ground on which the enemy was posted.

Here we find three bodies of the best Continental infantry regularly formed, and having, from the slow advance of the cavalry through the defile, had ample time for preparation and for the selection of the best ground within their reach, overthrown at the very first onset, though the men did their duty bravely and well. Two of the squares were attacked by single squadrons only; and even the two last by no more than a squadron and a half. The cavalry had 90 odd, say 100, men *hors-de-combat* on this occasion; but they inflicted on the enemy a loss of 1900 men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners. If we estimate the strength of the French squares at 700 men each,—for some would naturally

escape ; and if we suppose the squadrons of the legion to have had about eighty-five effective troopers each—and this is a high estimate, considering that the campaign, of nearly two months' duration, had been a very active one—we find that 700 ready and prepared tactical infantry could not in open day, and on fair field, resist 80 or 100 bold and resolute horsemen ; and that in a combat *à outrance*—for such cavalry and infantry combats may be termed—the 700 could, at the most, inflict on the 100 assailants a loss of from twenty to five-and-twenty men !

This, in fact, is over-rating the effect produced by the fire of the vanquished infantry, because it includes the effect of the fire delivered by the square which resisted, as well as the fire directed against General Bock's first squadron when charging the French cavalry ; and it includes whatever effect may have been produced by the sabres of that cavalry. Properly stated, the case should stand thus :—Four squares of the best French infantry, —for a rear-guard would, of course, be composed of the best troops,—amounting at least to 3000 men, were attacked by three squadrons and a half of cavalry, that could not at the most count 300 men ; and three of the squares were defeated, with a loss to the infantry of nearly 2000 men, while the victorious cavalry lost only 100 men. As it was in every respect a fair field, and as duty was done on all hands, let any unbiassed person say which is the most formidable weapon, the sword or the musket ? The many failures of the cavalry can prove nothing, until it is shown that duty was bravely and ably done. Herodotus tells us,—Melpomene, chap. 29, —that the Scythian cavalry, so renowned of old, fled at the mere braying of the asses in the Persian camp ; yet no one ever advanced the circumstance as a proof that the music of the long-eared race, great as the power of

the race avowedly is, was in itself sufficient to overthrow entire squadrons ; though the reasoning set up in favour of the infantry would apply with equal force to the long-eared victors of the Tanais. Both have frightened away cavalry ; but it has not yet been shown, that either possesses the power to fight them away.

An action fought in Portugal on the 11th July 1810, and in which a party of the 14th dragoons were repulsed by a body of French infantry, has been urged against the inference here attempted to be drawn in favour of the power of the cavalry. The British must, it is said, have charged home ; because Marshal Massena states in his report, that "twelve bayonets gave evidence of having been thrust into horses' breasts ;" "*douze bayonettes attestent qu'elles ont été enfonsés dans le poitrail des cheveaux.*" Had we more respect for the reports of Napoleon's Marshals than we profess to have, we should still be unable to receive their testimony, when completely at variance with the very laws of mechanism. If the dragoons arrived at full speed against the square, the horses must still, even if killed by the bayonets, have overthrown the opposing files by the mere force of mechanical impulse, and must thus have broken the compact mass of infantry. If they did not arrive at speed against the square, the case cannot be quoted in favour of the power of infantry to resist a home charge ; for against regularly formed infantry it is not pretended that cavalry can effect any thing, except by the full force and impulse of their horses. But on fair ground, and fairly directed, that force must be irresistible, as it always has been against musket and bayonet armed infantry. Some think that the improvement resulting from percussion locks will render all future success of the cavalry impossible. This, however, is a mistake ; for the num-

ber of flint-lock muskets, that missed fire in ordinary weather, was not—unless after long-continued firing—sufficient to influence the effect of any *single* volley. Percussion-caps will, at the best, therefore, add only two or three shots to the single solitary volley which the face of an infantry square can oppose to the on-rushing tempest of a cavalry charge properly delivered; and these two or three shots added to numbers fired, when so many miss, and so few tell, can go for absolutely nothing.

The capture of Madrid was the reward of the victory of Salamanca. The characteristic inertness of the Spaniards prevented them, however, from making timely efforts to profit by the success of their Allies: from all parts of the country the French were allowed to assemble their forces, which far outnumbered the British; and Lord Wellington, having been unable to reduce the Castle of Bourgos, was again obliged to fall back into Portugal. This retreat was attended with considerable loss; but though the French recovered the capital, and again advanced to the Tormes, their success was still far from counterbalancing their previous disasters. The rout of Salamanca remained unavenged, and its moral effect uneffaced; and to recover Madrid, the siege of Cadiz had been raised; Andalusia, and many of the southern provinces, evacuated. On both extremities of his vast possessions, the tide of battle had now turned against Napoleon: and the end of the year 1812,—a year that commenced under such gloomy auspices,—saw Germany liberated as far as the Oder, and Spain freed from the Pillars of Hercules to the shores of Guadiana: in the East and the West, a brilliant light rose high above the darkness which had so long rested on Europe, and thus gave the first signal for the great rising of nations that followed.

Printed Works that have served as authority for the Statements contained in the foregoing Books.

Bignon, Histoire de France depuis le 18 Brumaire Jusqu'en 1812.

The tenth and last volume terminates unfortunately with Napoleon's arrival at Wilna.

Capefigue, l'Europe pendant le Consulat et l'Empire de Napoleon. Paris, 12 vols.

Thibaudeau, Histoire de France et de Napoleon. Paris, 10 vols.

The three works here named are generally looked upon as furnishing the best French account of the events which they describe. And, as the authors are well informed on French affairs, and represent, besides, the three different and very distinct parties into which the nation was divided, they give an insight into the various views taken of the Imperial government, not merely by a party, but by the country at large. Truth also gains by their discrepancies; for, by the different traits in which they represent greatness, we easily perceive that the portraits are drawn from imagination, and not from life. All three write, in what are termed French sentiments,—*des sentiments Français*,—are extravagant admirers of the genius of the Emperor, and bitter enemies of all foreigners who wrought his fall. Bignon, the ablest, is a Bonapartist pure; he was favoured and employed by the Emperor, and writes his History, as he tells us, in conformity with Napoleon's last will. He served as a diplomatist under the empire, and brings all the wretched sophistry of the French diplomacy of the period to the composition of his work, which is thus disfigured, notwithstanding the ability of the author, and the many advantages he brings with him to the fulfilment of his task.

Capefigue is, by his own account, a royalist, though on what grounds it is not easy to perceive. His strange and affected style tends greatly to detract from his work, which contains

much valuable information, and is by far the fairest and most liberal history yet written in French on the subject of Napoleon.

Thibaudeau is a conventionalist, who became a member of Napoleon's Council of State. His republican zeal having been repressed, perhaps, by the iron rule of the Empire, and by the lucrative appointments of his situation, breaks out with full bitterness in the pages of his work, written, of course, after the restoration. On merely French affairs he is, however, well informed, and his republican zeal is also of advantage, as it sometimes removes the mantle of fiction by which so many strive to hide the deformity of the Imperial idol.

All three works contain many valuable and important documents relative to French affairs; but as regards the opinions, feelings, sentiments, and spring of action, that influenced other nations, the three authors are equally in the dark.

De Pradt, Histoire de l'Ambassade de Varsovie en 1812.

This work, which ran through four editions in the course of a single year, gives a vivid picture of the efforts made by the Poles in hopes of recovering their freedom, as well as of the dreadful situation to which the Duchy of Warsaw was reduced, by the conduct of the French troops and authorities. The author was French Ambassador at the Diet.

Marquis de Chambray, Histoire de l'Expedition de Russie.

One of the ablest military histories ever written.

Bouturlin, Histoire Militaire de la Campagne de Russie en 1812.

A half-official Russian statement; but containing, with many official documents, a number of errors, which render the work an unsafe guide.

Segur, Napoleon et le Grande Armée en 1812.

Beyond some notices of Napoleon's general manner and behaviour, the work has little value.

The many remonstrances which the author tells us were

addressed to Napoleon, against the Russian expedition, and which he generally gives at full length, may pretty safely be set down as inventions imposed upon his credulity. Such remonstrances were not in the character of the Emperor's *entourage*. None of his ministers or counsellors would hesitate much about an act of unprincipled aggression, as such acts were of almost every-day occurrence under his reign: and as regards the result of the expedition itself, hardly a doubt of ultimate success was entertained in any quarter. Civilians and soldiers were alike confident in the genius of the Emperor, and perfectly certain that victory would crown his efforts. Officers, and public functionaries of all grades, were anxious to accompany the army; and to be left behind was actually looked upon as a great misfortune.

GOURGAUD, EXAMEN CRITIQUE DE L'OUVRAGE DE M. DE SEGUR.

A severe critique of the foregoing work, and containing some interesting notices, the author having been first *Officier d'Ordonnance* to the Emperor during the campaign. And as the duties performed by the *Officiers d'Ordonnance* were the same as those which, in the English service, would be performed by the Aides-de-Camp of the Commander-in-Chief, and the officers of the General Staff attached to Head-Quarters, he had, of course, ample means of obtaining the best information.

To show, however, the little reliance that can be placed on the worshippers of Napoleon, we may here mention, that Gourgaud insults the Imperial Government in striving to uphold the Emperor: for he assures us, that the invasion of Swedish Pomerania was the unauthorised act of Marshal Davoust; wishing thus to make the reader believe that the commander of an army could, of his own accord, take forcible possession of a province belonging to a friendly power, without being punished or disavowed. We now know, what was sufficiently evident, that the order came from Paris; besides which, the French retained possession of the province till the events of the war forced them to abandon their prey.

Nor is this all. Napoleon, in preparing for the campaign,

caused 6,000,000 of Russian paper dollars to be forged and paid to the government of the Duchy of Warsaw, to aid them in equipping the troops intended to accompany the army. On the first attempt to issue the money, the Polish Jews discovered the fraud; and, on a remonstrance from the King of Saxony, the false paper was, after a poor and shuffling excuse, replaced by good coin. The whole of the mean proceeding is perfectly well known, for the forged paper, correspondence and all, was afterwards discovered at the house of a banker in Dresden, and surrendered to the Russian government; but Gourgaud denies the fact point blank, declaring, that "the proud character of the Emperor revolted from such unworthy proceedings." The reader will not be surprised, therefore, to find the General telling the world, that the city of Moscow, destroyed by the flames, had been well insured in London!

Baron Fain, Manuscrit de 1812.

Less interesting than the one of the year 1813.

Spectateur Militair, Vols. III. and VIII.

Vaudoncourt, Count Soltyk, Labaume, as actors in the scenes described, give some interesting notices.

Gl'Italiani in Russia.

A history of the war, rather than of the Italians in the war.

GERMAN WORKS.

History of the Wars in Europe, Vols. IX. and X.

A work confined entirely to military operations; but of the highest merit: first-rate in fact.

Life Sketches of the Liberating War, 3 vols.

The work is founded on the papers of the late Count Münster, long Hanoverian Ambassador in England, and in the confidence both of George III. and the Prince Regent. It contains, therefore, besides a short biography of the Count, a number of valuable and interesting documents, though the style and arrangement are as bad as possible.

COUNT GAGERN; MY SHARE IN POLITICS.

The author was Ambassador from the Duke of Nassau to the Court of the Tuileries, and being a man of distinguished talents, spirit, and conduct, he soon acquired considerable influence, and was on the most friendly footing with Talleyrand. His work is of great interest, but relates principally to the consulate, and the early years of Napoleon's reign.

LETTERS HOME, WRITTEN DURING THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN OF 1812, BY LT.-GENERAL VON LOSSBERG.

The General commanded a battalion of Westphalian infantry during the expedition; and, having since held the office of Minister of War at Cassel, has been able to add very interesting notes to his very interesting letters.

FATE AND ACTIONS OF THE CAVALRY IN THE CAMPAIGNS OF FREDERICK II., AND IN MODERN TIMES.

A book of first-rate ability; though of greater value for the campaigns of 1806-7, than for the war of 1812, which unfortunately terminates the work. The author's name is not mentioned on the title-page; but the work is universally ascribed to the Prussian General von Canitz, a gentleman who has filled some of the most important diplomatic missions since the wars, and may be considered as good authority therefore.

GENERAL CLAUSEWITZ.

The Campaigns in Russia. An unfinished fragment, but of the highest value and interest.

VON MILLAR, CAMPAIGN OF THE ALLIED ARMIES IN RUSSIA.

Relates principally to the Würtenberg troops.

SAXONY AND ITS WARRIORS DURING THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1812 AND 1813.

A very able work.

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